

Naturopathy for Acid Indigestion

From your Natural Holistic Plumber – Laura Keiles, PMP, ND, CNHP, CTN, CNW



Also known as Acid Reflux, GERD, or Heartburn affects 50% of the population with a tendency in men over women and 7% have it daily.

What is Acid indigestion?

It is an irritation in the esophagus due to excess acid, leaking through the pyloric sphincter back into the esophagus. The pyloric sphincter is the boundary from the esophagus to the stomach. It also could also be mistaken for Hiatal Hernia – a spasmodic cramping in the pyloric sphincter causing reflective pain in rib cage near the heart. Some of the irritation could be the result of a bacterial infection – *Helicobacter pylori*.

What activities could generate this condition?

- ✂ Poor diet/food combining
- ✂ Improper digestion due to lack of sufficient chewing or eating too quickly
- ✂ Acid/Base balance in stomach due to excess water at meals
- ✂ Overeating
- ✂ Excess use of 'raw' foods

Over time these activities impact the digestive organs (stomach, intestines, kidneys, liver and pancreas) leading to a weakened state. This weakened functionality permeates into the blood stream causing imbalances throughout the body.

What can be done?

There are naturopathic options – herbal and homeopathic – as well as personal choices of changes in eating behavior which can potentially reduce occurrence or prevent occurrence of acid indigestion. Options with a **carminative effect** are those which support the digestive system.

- ✂ Dietary Adjustment
 - Balance of the three food types
 - Primary Foods (30-40% of diet) – whole grains that are not refined or milled and beans. The dietary fiber is the key to slowing absorption of the carbohydrates and reducing overstimulation of the pancreas.
 - Secondary Foods (20-30% of diet) – fresh seasonal vegetables (mostly lightly cooked) which provide the vitamin and mineral nutrients. These foods stimulate the elimination process which is essential to maintaining a normal metabolism.
 - Tertiary Foods (5-10% of diet) – Dairy, Meat, Eggs, Fruits; Oils, including Olive, Sesame and Ghee (only 2%). As fruits are seasonal it is best to consume those that occur as part of their natural cycle of season (e.g. Watermelon in summer vs winter).

Do you find it is the fruit you love that is the digestive culprit? If that is the case, for some individuals consumption of the peel of the citrus or seeds of that apple or melons, or small quantities of shelled kernel of that apricot or peach may balance out the bloated, aggravated "sugar/yeast" conditions.

- Herbs as seasoning to supply Vitamins & Minerals
 - You can create a spice blend at home and add some additional herbs to keep handing for cooking and seasoning: Equal parts of garlic, parsley, basil, oregano and thyme (very

Italian seasoning base), then add equal quantities of seaweed powders, rose hips and ground red pepper (capsicum) and blend together. Lastly add small quantities of dandelion root and burdock root powder and adjust to taste.

- For those whose focus is more on the easily assimilated minerals and key trace minerals – mix equal parts of the following herbs: Parsley root and leaf, Horsetail, Yellow Dock, Comfrey root, Nettles, Watercress, Irish moss and Kelp – and simmer, a total of 4 ounces of herb, in a quart of water. Reduce by half and strain and keep liquid aside. Cover herbs with water and simmer 10 minutes longer. Strain again and mix with other liquid and cook down until volume is half and cool. Add Blackstrap Molasses or honey for flavor.

Did you know certain spices when added to foods can reduce gaseous effects and ease digestion? You might consider adding Allspice, Anise, Bay Leaf, Caraway, Cardamom, Cloves, Coriander, Cumin or Fennel added to your recipes.

✂ Application of Herbs

- Tinctures – highly concentrated herbal extracts of key herbs which aid in digestion. These extracts are in an alcohol (30%) base or in apple-cider vinegar, for those with high alkaloid content herbs. Additionally – the more potent herbs, that are not decocted, are made into tinctures
- Wine Tonics – decoctions (teas) of roots and barks or infusion of aromatic leaves and flower with honey, or raw sugar with bakers yeast to make your own wine/mead or leave out the fermentation items and use white wine. Traditionally, alcohol based herbal remedies are good for digestive problems as these are more readily absorbable.
- Teas, also known as decoctions, of the following herbs can be quite effective as gas reducing and digestive support: Ginger, Anise, Caraway, Coriander, Fennel, Cumin seed, Thyme (in small quantities)
- Powdered herb in Capsules, size 00 - Ginger, Dandelion Root and Gentian Root are great for supporting digestion.

References:

Tierra, M. (2003). *The Way of Herbs*. New York: Pocket Books.

Protocare Corporation (1997). Information found on <http://quickcare.org/gast/heartburn.html>

Note: This is for information sharing and educational purposes only. The practitioners at Princeton Integrative Health Center will not provide a diagnosis on any condition. Recommendations of supplementation are suggested and come from their certifications of their expertise. The information provided here is to illuminate to what level the health may be out of balance and provide information about dietary choices, educational programs and workshops for detoxification and nutritional support programs.

Please review any suggestions thoroughly before making your decisions and if under a medical professional's care, make sure to discuss and confirm with your practitioner before undergoing any cleansing or detoxification program.