



An uninvited guest who shows up after dinner and overstays his welcome, heartburn also goes by the name of acid reflux. The painful burning in the chest or throat results when stomach contents splash back up into the esophagus. Reflux can commonly last about an hour and usually occurs about an hour after eating. Frequent heartburn (once or twice per week over the course of several months) signals a chronic condition known as gastroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD, which calls for a doctor's care. Besides avoiding foods and beverages that may trigger heartburn for you—such as chocolate and alcohol—give these easy remedies a try.

—RACHEL DOWD

HEARTBURN SOOTHERS

AIMEE SICURO



CHEWING GUM

A study at King's College London School of Medicine and Dentistry found that chewing sugar-free gum for a half-hour after downing a heartburn-inducing meal can dampen the flames. "Saliva has a neutral pH, which coats the esophagus," explains Yvonne Romero, MD, an esophagologist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. Because chewing prompts acid production in the stomach, Romero suggests tossing the gum within 30 minutes or once it becomes hard and tasteless. Look for a sugar-free variety without sorbitol, which can make you gassy.

Glee Gum, \$1.09/15 pieces (Sugar-Free Lemon-Lime, shown); gleegum.com



WEDGE PILLOW

Heartburn sufferers often feel the burn at bedtime, disrupting their sleep. A wedge pillow uses gravity to help sweep stomach acid back where it belongs, explains gastroenterologist V. Raman Muthusamy, MD, director of Interventional Endoscopy and an associate professor of medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles. For the acid to drain, Muthusamy advises inclining the area from the Adam's apple down to the breastbone, or even to the level of the belly button.

MedSlant Acid Reflux Wedge Pillow, \$79.95; medslant.com



DEGLYCYRRHIZINATED LICORICE (DGL)

Chewing on licorice root (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) is a traditional remedy for a host of digestive upsets—including heartburn. Yet glycyrrhiza has also been linked with high blood pressure and low potassium levels. Deglycyrrhizinated licorice packs the same heartburn relief but without the harmful side effects. Boston-based Cathy Wong, ND, suggests slowly chewing 400 to 800 milligrams of DGL 20 minutes before meals or bedtime, up to three times per day.

Enzymatic Therapy DGL Original, \$13.95/100 chewable tablets; enzymatictherapy.com