



**GONSTEAD FAMILY CHIROPRACTIC**  
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Over the last few months I have been compiling information about what people can do when they suffer from certain ailments. Now, this can and will not be an alternative to a visit to a medical doctor but is meant as just a few hints and tips on how to get over problems a bit faster than usual.

## Heartburn / Acid Reflux:

Let's look at what happens when we eat food. We put food into our mouth and when biting off pieces of food we are starting the digestion by mixing it with saliva. From here the food is swallowed down the throat (pharynx) into the esophagus which leads right into the stomach. Peristalsis (muscular contractions) moves the food past the lower esophageal sphincter into the stomach. Here the food is transformed into a liquidly paste thanks to stomach acid and digestive enzymes. The next step of digestion is the small intestine where enzymes released by the liver, the gall bladder and the pancreas break down the food even further. Mainly here the nutrients are absorbed into the bloodstream. The leftover is being pushed into the large intestine where the rest of the water is removed, before it goes into the rectum where it finally gets eliminated out of the body.

### What happens when something goes wrong?

Sometimes stomach acid and some of the enzymes back up into the esophagus and cause a "burning" of the lining of the esophagus. Since this hap-

pens near one's heart, it often is called "heartburn" or just gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

Here are a few hints to diminish the occurrence of these digestive problems:

- Don't drink with your meals. This dilutes the stomach acid and enzymes and makes it harder for the body to digest your food.
- Eat smaller meals (which is healthier anyway) – so instead of three huge meals, eat six small ones. This will also help with any weight loss goals you might have (remember – losing weight helps lessen digestive problems as well).
- After you eat, don't lie down immediately. When you go to sleep, sleep on your left side.
- Don't smoke.
- Decrease stress in your life.
- Certain foods stimulate digestive problems (i.e. citrus fruits and juices, coffee, alcohol, ice cream and milk shakes, fatty foods and meat, tomatoes, French fries, mashed potatoes, etc.)

– rather eat "safer" foods (i.e. apples, bananas, carrots, broccoli, lean meats, skinless chicken, fish, low-fat foods, oatmeal, brown rice, etc.)

- Make sure your clothing doesn't fit too tight.
- How can chiropractic help with digestive problems? If your body makes too much stomach acid / enzymes it might be due to a Subluxation (misaligned vertebrae which produce nerve pressure) in your spine at the level that controls your stomach. If your brain cannot properly communicate with your stomach, you will have a problem. Finding this problem at the level of the spine and correcting the Subluxation can often make the heartburn disappear permanently.

*All my hints and tips don't eliminate the trip to your medical physician. Especially if you have symptoms such as nausea and vomiting blood, if you are rapidly losing weight without trying, if you are having chest pains or pain in arms, legs, or jaw, it's time to see your doctor.*