

## Indigestion

Each of us must have suffered from indigestion often, but for most people it is only a minor nuisance. It often happens as a result of overeating or eating something that doesn't suit you and only lasts for a short period of time.

People use the word indigestion to refer to different symptoms, but it is often used to describe a sense of discomfort in the middle of the upper abdomen resulting somehow from eating and swallowing. **Other known symptoms of indigestion include:**

- Chest or abdominal pain.
- Burning sensation in the chest (heartburn) caused by the reflux of food or fluid from the stomach to the throat or the back of the mouth. This condition is medically known as gastroesophageal reflux.
- Belching gas or air from the mouth.

In such cases, some drugs may be taken as per the advice of the pharmacist after making the necessary changes to reduce indigestion. However, if two weeks passes with no improvement, patients over 40 years old should consult a doctor.

### Lifestyle Changes:

If you have recently experienced sudden and mild indigestion episodes, there are some lifestyle changes that can be followed to solve the problem:

1. Stop smoking if you are a smoker.
2. Try to lose some weight and exercise more.
3. Eat healthy food and reduce the amount of fats.
4. Eat more fibers.
5. Avoid hot spices, salt and vinegar.
6. Reduce tea and coffee intake.
7. Avoid big meals before bed.
8. Relax. Anxiety and distress affect the way your stomach muscles work.

### Consult a pharmacist:



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- There are many indigestion drugs that can be bought without a prescription.
- Indigestion drugs available at pharmacies
- Item Impact
- Antacids: Neutralize stomach acid.
- Drugs that protect the lining of the stomach and esophagus: Line the stomach and esophagus and prevent acid from damaging them.
- Antispasmodics: Relaxes stomach wall muscles and reduce bloating.
- Histamine 2 receptor antagonists: Reduce gastric acid secretion.

### When to see a doctor?

In the following cases if two weeks passes with no improvement of symptoms:

- Unexplained weight loss.
- Loss of appetite.
- Difficulty swallowing.
- Vomiting blood or coffee ground.
- Blood in the stool.
- Indigestion while taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

Therefore, the doctor will do several tests or one of the following tests to specify the problem:

1. Blood test.
2. Endoscopy.
3. Barium X-rays.
4. Helicobacter pylori infection tests.
  - Histological tests.
  - Breath test.
  - Antibody test.

### Clinical Health Education Department

For further questions kindly contact us via email:

[Hpromotion@moh.gov.sa](mailto:Hpromotion@moh.gov.sa)