

**BLOCK & NATION, P.A.
FAMILY PRACTICE**

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COPING WITH HEARTBURN & REFLUX

If you are one of the millions of people who suffer from heartburn, the most common symptom of reflux, there are things you can do to improve your health and enhance the quality of your life.

1. Avoid spicy, acidic, or tomato-based foods, such as peppers, tomato sauce and citrus.	5. Don't exercise too soon after eating. Exercise can cause acid reflux and slow stomach emptying.
2. Limit your intake of coffee, tea, alcohol, and colas. These are all strong irritants to your gastrointestinal tract. Spearmint is an irritant too.	6. Avoid high fat foods, such as chocolates, fried foods, and cream sauces. Fats cause your esophagus to open and allow stomach contents to reflux up into your esophagus.
3. Watch your weight. Being overweight increases intra-abdominal pressure, which can increase acid reflux.	7. Stop (or at least cut down on) smoking. Nicotine causes ulcers and slows ulcer healing.
4. Don't gorge yourself at mealtime. Eat small to moderate amounts of food at one sitting. Avoid bedtime snacks and eat meals at least 3 to 4 hours before lying down. Full stomachs have more acid reflux than empty stomachs.	8. Elevate the head of your bed with blocks, or use a wedge under the mattress. Let gravity help keep your natural acids down in your stomach where they belong, instead of going up your esophagus which is not designed for tolerating acids.

9. See your physician if you are taking antacids daily.

For quick relief of heartburn, try over-the-counter antacids, such as Gaviscon, Roloids, Maalox, Mylanta, or Tums.

For stronger, long-lasting relief, use Prilosec, PepcidAC, or Zantac 150 over-the-counter (these do not work immediately, but may be taken regularly and in combination with quick-acting antacids).

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Board Certified In Family Medicine

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