



Auckland Regional Public Health Service Nutrition Fact Sheet – Advice if you have reflux oesophagitis (heart burn)

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Heart burn is caused by acid from the stomach passing back up the gullet. To reduce inflammation and reduce likelihood of discomfort follow these guidelines.

1. Avoid stimulants like **alcohol** and **smoking**.
2. **Reduce weight** if you are overweight. Considerable pain relief is often experienced after loss of excess weight.
3. **Eat small, frequent meals**, but take care you don't increase the total amount of food you eat.
4. **Eat slowly** in quiet relaxed surroundings.
5. **Chew food thoroughly**.
6. **Avoid bending** from the waist. Always bend from the knees.
7. **Avoid lying flat**, especially after meals. A semi upright position for sleeping is recommended either with an extra pillow or blocks under the head of the bed (10 -20 cm).
8. The foods you eat should remain as **varied** as possible. Everyone reacts differently to food; be guided by your own experience. Some foods and drinks which may cause discomfort are: high fat meals, spicy foods, onions, alcohol, chocolate and strong caffeine containing beverages.
9. Continue to eat **a variety of foods** from the four food groups each day:
 - choose at least **6** servings of breads and cereals
 - choose at least **5** servings of fruit and vegetables
 - choose **2** servings of milk and milk products
 - choose **1 - 2** servings of meat, fish, chicken, eggs, dried beans/lentils

For more information on healthy eating and food servings ask for a Ministry of Health food and nutrition pamphlet e.g. "Healthy Eating for Adult New Zealanders" or "Healthy Lifestyles for a Healthy Weight."