

EXPRESS SCRIPTS CANADA  
**PHARMACY**



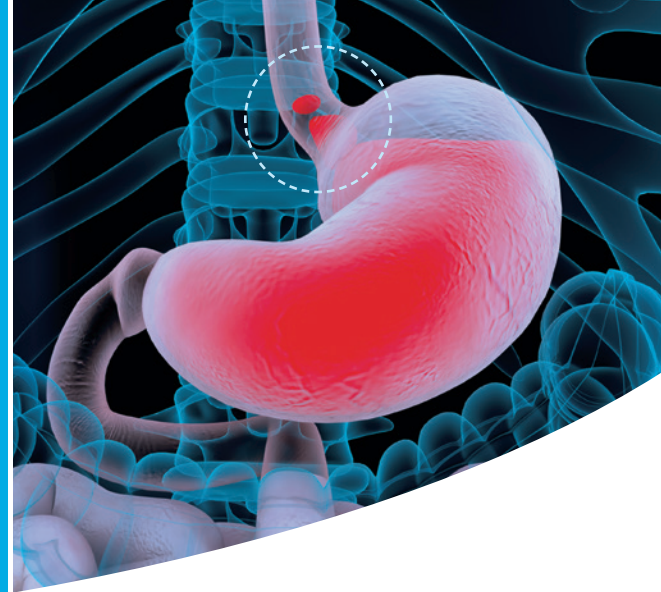
# Heartburn

[pharmacy.express-scripts.ca](https://pharmacy.express-scripts.ca)

# What is heartburn?

Heartburn is also known as heartburn or dyspepsia. It's often experienced as a feeling of pain or discomfort that often starts in the upper abdomen. While it is commonly called heartburn, it is not caused by problems with your heart.

Heartburn can happen at any age. It occurs when food and stomach juices back up (reflux) into the esophagus, which is the tube that leads from the throat to the stomach.



## Causes of heartburn?

- Incomplete closing of the valve between the esophagus and the stomach
- Foods and drinks such as fried and fatty foods, chocolate, caffeine, alcohol or carbonated beverages
- Certain medications like antibiotics, pain relievers and iron supplements
- Smoking and use of other tobacco products
- Stress which can increase the amount of acid your stomach makes Other medical conditions associated with heartburn like a hiatal hernia, stomach cancer, stomach or pancreatic inflammation, reduced blood flow to the intestines, celiac disease, Crohn's disease, gallstones, constipation and thyroid deficiency
- Bloating

## When to see your doctor?

Heartburn is not a serious condition itself, but it can be a sign of a serious underlying condition. Consult with your doctor if:

- You suffer from heartburn frequently or your symptoms last more than 2 weeks
- You have moderate to severe belly pain
- You are over 50 years of age with new symptoms or your symptoms become more severe or frequent
- Your heartburn symptoms have become more frequent or severe
- You have pain or difficulty when swallowing
- You are experiencing nausea or vomiting
- You have had significant weight loss recently
- You have had heartburn symptoms for more than 2 weeks even though you are taking over-the-counter antacids
- Your symptoms interferes with your lifestyle or daily activities
- You have black or bloody bowel movements

These symptoms may suggest a serious medical condition. You should immediately seek medical advice.

## Treatment

You may be able to avoid heartburn by following these steps:

- Avoid lying down after meals, and wait at least three hours after the last meal before going to bed
- Limit or avoid alcohol and caffeine intake
- Eating smaller, more frequent meals
- Reducing stress
- Quit smoking
- Wait at least one hour after eating before exercising
- Reduce weight if your Body Mass Index (BMI) is over 30. If you don't know your BMI [click here](#) for an easy-to-use online BMI calculator
- Avoid foods that cause or worsen symptoms of heartburn.

## Tips

- Ask your doctor or pharmacist about over the counter or prescription medications to relieve stomach upset
- Read the instructions on the medication package carefully to find out how much to take and how often to experience the most benefit
- For liquid antacids, shake well. Take before or after meals

*Disclaimer: The information found in this brochure is not intended to replace the advice of your pharmacist or physician. If you have any questions specific to your health, please contact your healthcare provider.*