

The Burning Truth About Heartburn

(NAPSA)—According to the American Gastroenterological Association, about 25 million American adults suffer daily from heartburn; and the kind of relief heartburn sufferers look for can be summed up in one word—fast.

“Speed of relief is a big concern when I talk to my patients about their heartburn treatment options,” said Dr. Brett Bernstein, Division of Digestive Diseases at Beth Israel Medical Center, NY. “Heartburn can be very painful, and choosing an effective way to get relief means first understanding what causes the pain and then clarifying the differences between various medications.”

“Even if you only have heartburn occasionally, which I believe is the case with about 70 percent of Americans, I recommend that people identify their triggers and if possible, adjust their lifestyles accordingly,” advises Dr. Bernstein. “And if you need to take something, an over-the-counter medicine like Zantac 75® acid reducer provides fast relief or prevents heartburn if taken before meals.”

There are a variety of treatments available without a prescription, including antacids, such as Roloids®, H2RAs (acid reducers) like Zantac 75 and a proton pump inhibitor (PPI), such as Prilosec OTC™. One important difference with Prilosec OTC is that it is not intended for immediate relief. In fact, it can take one to four days before it provides complete relief. On the other hand, an H2RA like Zantac 75 works fast so you get relief in minutes as opposed to days. Also, Prilosec OTC must be taken continuously for 14 days straight whether you have heartburn or not.

Acids backing up from the stomach and irritating the tissues of the esophagus, the tube that passes from the throat to the stomach, cause the “burn” in heartburn. Certain foods and bev-



PPIs or proton pump inhibitors are not intended for immediate relief and may take days to work.

erages, as well as lifestyle factors such as too much stress, overeating and not enough exercise can cause heartburn.

Many people may know that spicy dishes and coffee are common heartburn triggers, but may not realize that even the time of day one eats can affect if and when heartburn will strike. For example, drinking alcohol and late night eating, especially heavy meals, followed shortly after by lying down, can allow acid to escape from the stomach and seep back into the esophagus, irritating sensitive tissue and causing a very painful case of nighttime heartburn.

“When you wake up in the middle of the night with heartburn, you want fast relief. It’s important to have a remedy on hand, like Zantac 75, that works fast, right when you need it, so you can get back to sleep and get a good night’s rest,” says Bernstein.

If heartburn does not respond to treatment with an antacid, H2RA or PPI, talk to your doctor. Heartburn itself is easy to address, but when unresponsive to treatment, may be a warning sign of a bigger problem. With all the treatments available today, no one should have to suffer unnecessarily.