

SEE YOUR DOCTOR

Tips To Help You Have Happier Mealtimes

(NAPSA)—When you're enjoying family, food and celebrations, a common condition known as Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease or GERD can act up, inhibiting your ability to enjoy all those meals, parties and people. What many people don't realize is that these common symptoms can be the sign of a more serious condition.

If heartburn occurs two or more days per week, despite treatment or changes in diet, it may be GERD. If left untreated, the acid churning up from the stomach can wear away lining of the esophagus, creating a serious condition called erosive esophagitis. Erosive esophagitis involves physical injury to the esophagus caused by stomach acid. In addition, scars from tissue damage may narrow the esophagus and make swallowing difficult.

Unfortunately, many people suffer silently, blaming their symptoms on lifestyle or eating habits, which may not be the cause of the problem. A tendency to overeat and indulge in greasy or acidic foods can magnify GERD symptoms even more.

Preventing Heartburn

For GERD sufferers, the following tips can help you curb the burn:

- **Don't Stuff.** Eat small meals at a pace your body can handle.
- **Spice Up Mealtimes with Stimulating Conversation.** Avoid hot and spicy foods that may trigger heartburn, such as fatty and fried foods, onions, garlic, chocolate and peppermint.
- **Avoid too much alcohol.** Excessive alcoholic beverages contribute to the potential for the stomach's contents to flow up into the esophagus.



Get help for heartburn. It could be a symptom of a more serious condition.

- **Back to the Basics.** Stick with items from the basic food groups including fruits and vegetables, rice, meats low in fat such as turkey and chicken, fish and breads and cereals. Being overweight often worsens symptoms, and healthy eating provides many additional benefits.

- **Don't "Veg Out" Too Much.** Avoid "couch potato" syndrome and don't lie down for a nap after you eat. The likelihood of heartburn increases and can last longer when lying flat right after a meal.

- **Carve Out Late Night Snacking.** Don't have a snack too close to bedtime. Eating meals at least two to three hours before going to sleep may lessen reflux.

Take a Healthy Timeout

No matter how minor heartburn or other related symptoms may seem, tell your doctor about them, especially if these symptoms worsen during hectic times.

More than 21 million Americans suffer from GERD, but often make light of the chronic heartburn symptoms. Anyone with acid reflux disease may develop erosive esophagitis, not just those people with the most frequent or most severe heartburn. If you have any degree of heartburn on two or more days a week, you should see your doctor and discuss ways to control it and heal any possible damage to the esophagus.

The good news is that for many people the damage to the esophagus can be healed in four to eight weeks with a prescription proton pump inhibitor (PPI), such as NEXIUM. The lining of your stomach contains millions of special cells that produce acid via "acid pumps." It is the job of these pumps to produce the acid that helps in the digestion of food. NEXIUM works by decreasing the acid produced by these pumps.

About NEXIUM®

(esomeprazole magnesium)

NEXIUM is recommended for treating frequent, persistent heartburn and other symptoms associated with acid reflux disease. The drug is also approved for healing erosive esophagitis. Studies show that up to 94 percent of patients were healed with NEXIUM. Most erosions heal in 4 to 8 weeks. Individual results may vary, and only a doctor can determine if erosions to the esophagus have occurred. The most common side effects of NEXIUM are headache, diarrhea and abdominal pain. Symptom relief does not rule out the existence of other serious stomach conditions.

For more information, visit www.acidrefluxdisease.com or call 1-877-REFLUX-2.