

## HEARTBURN & INDIGESTION

**HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?** 1-2 weeks

**HOW SERIOUS IS IT?** Minor

**CAN I STILL WORK?** Yes

### WHAT IS IT?

Heartburn and indigestion are symptoms of pain or discomfort in the upper abdomen or chest. They often result from overeating, eating high fat meals or being overweight.



### HOW DO I TREAT IT?

- Avoid fatty and fried meals, and eating large meals late in the day. Also try to avoid carbonated soft drinks, coffee and alcohol. Eat slowly and chew properly.
- Reduce or stop smoking.

### MEDICINES:

Various drugs, that neutralise the acid in your stomach (antacids) are available without prescription over the counter at pharmacies and supermarkets.

### WHEN DO I NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION?

Rarely, more serious medical problems may cause indigestion – particularly if you are aged 55 or over. Seek medical advice if your symptoms do not respond to treatment or you notice any of the following:

- You suffer from severe, persistent (longer than three weeks), worsening and unexplained pain in your upper abdomen – particularly if occurring together with other symptoms, such as pain in your chest, breathlessness, sweating, feeling sick or vomiting.
- You vomit blood or dark lumps (like 'coffee grounds').
- The colour of your poo has become very dark (looking like tar).
- You feel faint, or you've collapsed.
- You develop difficulties with swallowing.
- You suffer from unexplained fever, night sweats, weight loss for no apparent reason, or you notice a swelling or mass in your upper abdomen.