

# Dyspepsia/Indigestion



This is a collection of symptoms affecting the upper gastrointestinal tract and includes indigestion, acid reflux, heartburn and abdominal pain or discomfort.

## Symptoms include:

- Abdominal pain and discomfort
- Bloating
- Heartburn felt as a burning in the chest
- Nausea and vomiting related to eating
- Regurgitation

## Self-care advice

- Try to identify and then avoid triggers by keeping a food diary
- Limit fried food, caffeine and alcohol
- Eat regular meals at a sensible pace
- Cut back on smoking – ideally, give up altogether
- Lose weight if necessary
- Exercise regularly to improve muscle tone
- Symptoms that occur at night may lessen if the last meal of the day is eaten earlier
- Prop up the head and shoulders while in bed, for example by using an extra pillow
- Relaxation techniques such as yoga and meditation can help to ease stress
- If medication might be an issue, discuss changing the medication or taking after food to lessens the chance of them irritating the stomach
- Using antacids, rafting products (alginates) or OTC proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) will ease symptoms

## Red flag symptoms

- Gastro-intestinal bleeding that may present as 'coffee grounds' in vomit or tarry stools
- Dysphagia (difficulty in swallowing)
- Progressive unintentional weight loss
- Persistent vomiting
- Possible cardiac pain that could be accompanied with cold and clammy feelings
- Severe sudden pain across the abdomen often accompanied with nausea that could indicate appendicitis

## Onward referrals

- No relief gained from self-care

## Signposting

- Pharmacy First Scotland – Antacids/Alginates/PPIs
- Common Ailment Service Wales – Antacids/Alginates/PPIs
- Locally commissioned service for smoking cessation
- Locally commissioned service for weight loss

The information provided is correct at the time of publication, any information provided should be under the supervision of the Responsible Pharmacist. We hold no responsibility for any decisions made using this information.

Sept 2024 Version 1