PREVENTING HEARTBURN / HYPERACIDITY

Lifestyle changes can help prevent symptoms of heartburn, also known as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). The major cause of GERD is that the lower esophageal sphincter, located where the esophagus joins the stomach, is weak or relaxes inappropriately. Watching your diet and activity can reduce the chance of upward flow of gastric acid.

Other than taking your prescribed medications, here are some simple things you can do which can help your heartburn.

1. **WATCH WHAT YOU EAT**
   Avoid the follow foods which can trigger heartburn: Caffeinated products (coffee, tea, colas), alcohol, citrus foods (eg. Lemons, oranges, juices), tomatoes, spicy foods, chocolates, peppermint, onions, high-fat and oily foods.

2. **IF YOU SMOKE, STOP SMOKING**

3. **AVOID VERY LARGE MEALS**
   A very full stomach will increase the chance of acid regurgitation

4. **DON'T GO TO BED WITH A FULL STOMACH**
   Eat at least 2 to 3 hours before you go to bed. This will allow enough time for the food to digest.

5. **GO FOR WALK AFTER DINNER**
   Instead of sitting down (which can put pressure on your stomach), go for an evening walk, to help your food digest better.

6. **AVOID TIGHT CLOTHING**
   Avoid wearing tight jeans or belts. Comfier clothing will reduce heartburn.

7. **SHED SOME WEIGHT**
   If you are overweight, losing some weight will help.

8. **RAISE THE HEAD OF YOUR BED**
   For those with severe symptoms, try elevating the head of your bed so that your head and chest are higher than your feet. You can do this by placing blocks under the bed posts at the head of your bed. Do not use piles of pillows instead because this will put pressure on your stomach and may make your heartburn worse.