YOUR COACH'S PLAN · FREE WITH THE ARTICLE

The Reflux Relief Plan

The 5 everyday foods most likely to quietly trigger acid reflux, the foods that calm the burn, and the timing habits that help.

✓ Checked against Mayo Clinic, Harvard Health, and Cleveland Clinic

The 5 quiet triggers

1. Fried & fatty foods · linger and slow the stomach

2. Chocolate · relaxes the valve

3. Coffee · caffeine loosens the seal

4. Peppermint · relaxes the valve, not soothes it

5. Carbonated drinks · pressure pushes acid up

Your 3-step plan

1. Keep a two-week food and symptom diary

WHY THIS WORKS

Reflux triggers are highly individual. The food that wrecks one person's evening does nothing to another's, so a short written record reveals your specific culprits far better than cutting out every food on a generic list.

SAY THIS AT YOUR VISIT

"I have been tracking my meals and heartburn for two weeks. Here is the pattern I am seeing. Does this point to reflux, and what should I try next?"

THIS WEEK'S CHECKLIST

☐ Note what you eat and the time

☐ Mark when heartburn follows and how strong

☐ After two weeks, circle your repeat offenders

Source: Mayo Clinic; Harvard Health

2. Watch the quiet triggers, not just spice

WHY THIS WORKS

Fried foods, chocolate, coffee, peppermint, and carbonated drinks set off reflux by relaxing the valve at the top of the stomach or adding pressure. They cause symptoms without being spicy, which is exactly why they get overlooked.

SAY THIS AT YOUR VISIT

"Spicy food is not my main problem. It seems to be fatty meals, coffee, and chocolate in the evening. Does that fit with reflux?"

THIS WEEK'S CHECKLIST

☐ Test one trigger at a time, not all at once

☐ Try chocolate and coffee earlier and smaller

☐ Swap the evening soda for still water

Source: Harvard Health

3. Fix your meal size and timing first

WHY THIS WORKS

Large meals and eating close to bedtime both worsen reflux, and symptoms are worse lying down. Smaller meals and leaving about three hours before lying down help nearly everyone, whatever their food triggers turn out to be.

SAY THIS AT YOUR VISIT

"I have started eating smaller meals and stopping food three hours before bed. If that is not enough, what are my next options?"

THIS WEEK'S CHECKLIST

☐ Eat smaller portions and slow down

☐ No food within 3 hours of lying down

☐ Raise the head of the bed if nights are worst

Source: Mayo Clinic

Foods that are usually safe

- ✓ **Lean proteins** · chicken, fish, and leaner cuts are less likely to trigger reflux (Cleveland Clinic)
- ✓ **Vegetables and whole grains** · high-fiber, low-fat choices that help manage stomach acid (Cleveland Clinic)
- ✓ **Less acidic fruits** · bananas, melons, and berries are gentle on the stomach (Cleveland Clinic)
- ✓ **Smaller, earlier meals** · eating less and not lying down within 3 hours eases reflux (Mayo Clinic)

Full sources

Mayo Clinic · Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), symptoms and causes
Harvard Health · GERD diet: Foods that help reduce acid reflux (2024)
Cleveland Clinic · GERD diet: Foods that help with acid reflux (2024)

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