

Heartburn and Gastric Protection

Heartburn may be caused by a lot of things. The most chronic form is known as **GERD**. Heartburn, as the name suggests, is a **burning sensation** in the **chest**, which is caused by **stomach acid** travelling upwards to the **throat**.

Some types of food and drink, such as coffee, alcohol, chocolate, and fatty or **spicy** foods, may **trigger** heartburn. Heartburn may be accompanied by the following: a sour taste in the mouth, a **cough** or **hic-**

cups, a **hoarse voice**, and **bloating** or **nausea**.

PTA: Guten Tag.

Male customer: I'm afraid that my German is not very good.

How may I help you?

I have **indigestion**. Do you have anything for heartburn?

We have lots of OTC-products. Would you prefer a proton pump inhibitor or an antacid? What's the difference?

Antacids neutralize stomach acid a lot faster than PPIs, and the effects last for 30 minutes to some hours. PPIs, on the other hand, suppress gastric acid secretion, and take longer to have an effect. PPIs are used as gastric protection for patients on non-steroidal anti-inflammatories because of their effect on the stomach lining. I'll take the antacid.

Do you mind if I ask you something about your reflux?
No, not at all.

Have you often had indigestion in the last weeks or months?
Yes, but not regularly. I usually connect it with eating too much spicy food.

I see. And you haven't had a **persistent cough**, or a **hoarse voice** in recent weeks?

Now that you say it, yes I have. I've had a tickly cough on and off for a few months now. I put it down to an allergy, as I had no cold symptoms.

It's possible that you might have a reflux disorder. The coughing and hoarseness may be caused by acid entering the oesophagus which may damage the larynx and pharynx. The best thing would be to make an appointment at your doctor's surgery, so that you can be tested for a few things. Such as?

Such as to make sure that you don't have a hiatus hernia, or that your reflux is not caused by helicobacter pylori. Things such as smoking may also cause the problem to worsen. I was thinking of quitting! I suppose I should make an appointment. Thank you for the advice.

Here are your chewable antacid tablets. If you notice no improvement, please go to your doctor! ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

heartburn	Sodbrennen
gastric protection	Magenschutz
GERD	gastroesophageal reflux disease
GORD	in British English: gastro-oesophageal reflux disease
burning sensation	brennendes Gefühl
chest	Brust
stomach acid	Magensäure
throat	Hals, Kehle, Rachen
spicy	scharf, pikant
trigger	auslösen
cough	Husten
hiccups	Schluckauf
hoarse voice	heisere Stimme
bloating	Vollegefühl
nausea	Übelkeit, Brechreiz
indigestion	Magenverstimmung, Verdauungsstörung
suppress	unterdrücken
gastric acid	Magensäure
secretion	Sekret, Absonderung
persistent	hartnäckig
larynx	Kehlkopf
pharynx	Rachen
hiatus hernia	Zwerchfellbruch
chewable tablets	Kautabletten
improvement	Verbesserung

