

Steering Clear: The Ten Worst Foods for Acid Reflux

Acid reflux, also known as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), can be exacerbated by certain dietary choices. Individuals experiencing acid reflux often find relief by avoiding specific foods known to trigger symptoms. Here's a closer look at the [ten worst foods for acid reflux](#) and why they can contribute to discomfort:

Citrus Fruits:

Citrus fruits like oranges, lemons, grapefruits, and tomatoes are highly acidic. The acidity can irritate the esophagus and trigger acid reflux symptoms. Opt for less acidic fruits like bananas or apples instead.

Coffee and Caffeinated Beverages:

Caffeine relaxes the lower esophageal sphincter (LES), a muscle that helps prevent stomach acid from flowing back into the esophagus. This relaxation can lead to increased acid reflux. Consider switching to decaffeinated options or herbal teas.

Chocolate:

Chocolate contains both caffeine and a substance called theobromine, which can relax the LES. Additionally, chocolate is high in fat, another factor that can contribute to acid reflux. Limiting chocolate intake can help manage symptoms.

Fried and Fatty Foods:

High-fat foods, especially fried items, can relax the LES and delay stomach emptying. This prolongs the time during which stomach acid is in contact with the esophagus, increasing the likelihood of acid reflux symptoms.

Peppermint and Mint:

While peppermint may help soothe digestive issues for some, it can relax the LES, potentially exacerbating acid reflux. Mint-flavored items, including candies and teas, should be consumed with caution.

Spicy Foods:

Spices, particularly chili peppers, can irritate the esophagus and contribute to acid reflux symptoms. If you enjoy spicy foods, consider milder alternatives to reduce the likelihood of discomfort.

Onions and Garlic:

Onions and garlic, although flavorful, are known to relax the LES. They can also increase stomach acid production. For those prone to acid reflux, it may be advisable to limit the use of these ingredients in cooking.

Carbonated Beverages:

Carbonated drinks, including sodas and sparkling water, can introduce gas into the digestive system, leading to increased pressure on the LES. This pressure can contribute to the reflux of stomach acid.

Alcohol:

Alcohol relaxes the LES and can irritate the esophagus, making it a common trigger for acid reflux symptoms. Limiting alcohol intake, especially before bedtime, may help reduce symptoms.

Tomato-Based Products:

Tomatoes and tomato-based products, such as sauces and ketchup, are acidic and can contribute to acid reflux. Opt for low-acid tomato varieties or cook tomatoes to reduce acidity.