



# 11 Foods & Drinks That Can Make Acid Reflux Worse, According To Experts



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An advertisement for Folgers coffee. It features two athletes: a swimmer on the left and a basketball player on the right. The Folgers logo and the Olympic rings are at the top, with the text "Proud Sponsor of Team USA". The central text reads "LEAD TO GREATNESS." and a red button at the bottom says "CATCH EVERY MOMENT" with a right-pointing arrow. There are blue starburst graphics at the bottom left.

The foods we eat can definitely influence the way our bodies react afterwards, and if you're anything like me, you know that indigestion and heartburn are *no fun*. Thus, avoiding [foods and drinks that make acid reflux worse](#) can help prevent the problem from arising and keep your digestion healthy and burp-free.

As a [certified health coach](#), I work with clients on keeping their digestion healthy and avoiding triggers that can cause indigestion, heartburn or throat or stomach discomfort. When they experience these symptoms, it can be hard to feel comfortable eating, and it makes for opportunities to miss out of valuable nutrients. Plus, let's be honest, acid reflux is just unpleasant and should be avoided as much as possible. A great way to be mindful is to think of the foods and drinks that can cause irritation and can allow [stomach acid to splash into the esophagus](#), says [Elaine Magee, MPH, RD](#) with WebMD. Here are eleven foods and drinks that can contribute to acid reflux and should be best limited or avoided, especially if you are prone to getting frequent outbursts. By sticking with foods that do not have such effects, you'll be better able to manage your digestion and bodily responses after eating a meal.

## 1. Tomatoes

According to [dietician Keri Gans, MS, RD, CDN](#), over email with me, tomatoes can definitely be an irritant for many due to its highly acidic nature.

“Tomatoes or tomato based products can also be a trigger for many,” she warns. Instead of tomato-based sauces, like a marinara, opt for a pesto or some olive oil instead. Plus, limit intake of tomatoes so that your body doesn’t become too acidic.

## 2. Caffeine

According to Gans, caffeine can also lead to acid reflux and it can keep you awake at night when you’re trying to head off to sleep. Another note, she adds: “It is important not to go to sleep immediately after eating and for some

people it is recommended that they keep their head elevated when sleeping.” This is a good rule regarding most foods and the ability to decrease risk of indigestion and acid reflux.

### 3. Alcohol

Alcohol can irritate the stomach and lead to heartburn in many people, says Rachel Wong, Sleep Research Specialist at [OSO](#), over email with me. Also, according to expert, Rachel Nall, RN, BSN, CCRN with Healthline, studies have shown that both [wine and beer can trigger acid reflux](#) symptoms in men and women. Be mindful of intake and consider making a few days alcohol-free.

## 4. Spicy Foods

According to both Gans and Wong, spicy foods can also increase likelihood of acid reflux symptoms, heartburn and digestive discomfort. Plus, Dr. Edward Group DC, NP, DACBN, DCBCN, DABFM at The Global Healing Center adds that spicy foods, such as hot peppers and many Asian cuisine staple dishes, can heat the body and [create heartburn and indigestion](#).

## 5. Fatty Foods

I'm talking about bad fats, such as trans fats and saturated fats (in high amounts). According to gastroenterologist Lauren B. Gerson, MD, an associate professor of medicine at Stanford University, in interview with WebMD, high-fat foods, such as french fries and pizza, [take longer to digest](#) and can lead to indigestion and acid reflux symptoms. Opt for grilled, baked, steamed or roasted as better preparation styles.

## 6. Carbonated Drinks

Put down that soda, seltzer and Champagne! Apparently those [bubbles can lead to acid reflux](#), as told by Anish Sheth, MD, assistant professor of medicine at Yale University in interview with WebMD. Sheth says this is due to the escape of trapped air that can come upwards from the stomach and result in esophageal burn and belching due to the acidic contents.

## 7. Mint Flavored Gum



While [chewing gum is beneficial for acid reflux](#), as it gets saliva moving and neutralizes stomach acid, says Joy Bauer, MS, RN, CDN, on her blog, the benefits only apply to flavored types, such as cinnamon or fruit-based, and in fact, mint flavored gum can have an opposite effect, leading to greater acid reflux symptoms.

## 8. Chocolate

While [dark chocolate touts many benefits](#), such as anti-inflammatories and

mood-boosting properties, according to [Kris Gunnars, BSc](#), CEO and founder of Authority Nutrition, it can contribute to acid reflux due to its content of the [stimulant theobromine and high-fat concentration](#), says Jamie Koufman, MD, Jordan Stern, MD, and French master chef Marc Bauer to Health Magazine in interview.

## 9. Grapefruit

In addition to other citrus fruits, such as oranges, lemons and limes, [grapefruits can be highly acidic](#) and lead to acid reflux, advises Robynne Chutkan, MD. Chutkan, founder of the Digestive Center for Women in Chevy Chase, Md. and gastroenterologist at Georgetown Hospital in Washington, D.C., in interview with WebMD. Be mindful of citrus fruits and consider

eating other options instead.

## 10. Alliums

Garlic and onion, two staples from the allium family, can [cause acid reflux and heartburn](#) in many people, advises Bonnie Taub-Dix, MA, RD, in conversation with WebMD. Thus, instead of sprinkling these onto meals, try some different herbs and spices that might not cause the same effect, and keep a journal to track how your body feels after each experimentation.

## 11. Fatty Meats

Due to their high fat content, fatty meats have been shown to increase acid reflux. As it can slow the digestive process and allow for a more distended stomach, [high-fat meat can lead to acid reflux symptoms](#), such as belching, indigestion, heartburn and a sour taste in the mouth, among other challenges. Stick to leaner cuts and perhaps make the bulk of your meal vegetables and complex carbs, instead of meats.

While eating not too close to bed and limiting acidic foods will help prevent acid reflux from happening, it's also important to take note of your personal triggers, as our bodies differ and can experience distinct reactions. Keeping a journal can help you track how your body is affected so you can make wise decisions moving forward.

*Images: Pixabay (12); Bustle*