

Quit Your Bellyachin

Holiday treats can upset more than your weight-loss efforts: They may also do a number on your stomach. But put down the antacids—our all-natural strategies bring relief fast.

BY KIM SCHWORM ACOSTA

Gut trip-up HEARTBURN KEEPS YOU UP

Holiday classics, such as chocolate and fattening dishes, can trigger heartburn (aka GERD, or gastroesophageal reflux disease), which occurs when acid from your stomach rises into your esophagus.

NIP IT EARLY Avoiding trigger foods, which can force acid upward, is a good start to preventing heartburn, says Sandra Hoogerwerf, M.D., assistant professor of internal medicine at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Trigger foods vary from person to person, but common culprits include fatty foods, chocolate, chile peppers, tomatoes, citrus juices, alcohol, and coffee. So next time you face that buffet, grab veggies with hummus instead of crackers with cheese or chips with creamy dips. And do your best to seek out lower-fat desserts, such as biscotti or gingersnaps, instead of a slice of rich cheesecake or pie.

Another helpful hint: Stop eating 3 hours before bedtime to give food time to move through your system

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

There's no reason to be embarrassed if you're hit with heartburn, constipation, or diarrhea this holiday. In fact, we were shocked to learn how common digestive upsets are. Take a look at the stats:

50 MILLION	NUMBER OF U.S. ADULTS WHO HAVE HEARTBURN AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH
2.5 MILLION	NUMBER OF ANNUAL DOCTOR VISITS IN THE U.S. DUE TO CONSTIPATION
4	NUMBER OF TIMES ON AVERAGE THAT U.S. ADULTS HAVE DIARRHEA PER YEAR



before you lie down. Finally, clothing that puts pressure on the stomach is a heartburn don't, according to Anil Minocha, M.D., author of *Natural Stomach Care* (Avery, 2003).

OOPS! TOO LATE If all your efforts to offset heartburn fail, chew gum for 30 minutes. Research suggests that the saliva stimulated by chewing works to neutralize acid and force fluids back into the stomach. Another strategy is to put a foam wedge under your mattress to elevate the head of your bed 6 to 8 inches so you're using gravity to prevent acid from creeping into the esophagus. Another idea: Try sleeping on your left side. Some research has indicated that left-side sleeping helps move acid from the stomach more quickly.

Gut trip-up YOU JUST CAN'T GO

A jam-packed schedule sends your healthy meal planning out the window. And when your fiber and water intake drops, constipation is often the result.

NIP IT EARLY To prevent constipation, drink like a fish. Dehydration is a common factor in abdominal pain and constipation, and upping your liquid intake will add fluid to stool, making it softer and easier to pass. Avoid lots of caffeine or alcohol, which can worsen dehydration. If you do imbibe (it *is* the holidays, after all), sip one glass of H₂O for every cocktail or cup of coffee.

Disruptions to your routine are also major causes of constipation, so try to keep up your good habits. That means eating plenty of whole grains and veggies, which add bulk and water to stool to offset constipation. When you know it will be tough to eat well in the evening

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Read the Patient Information that comes with VESicare before you start taking it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This leaflet does not take the place of talking with your doctor or other healthcare professional about your condition or treatment. Only your doctor or healthcare professional can determine if treatment with VESicare is right for you.

What is VESicare?

VESicare is a prescription medicine used in adults to treat the following symptoms due to a condition called overactive bladder:

- Having to go to the bathroom too often, also called "urinary frequency,"
 - Having a strong need to go to the bathroom right away, also called "urgency,"
 - Leaking or wetting accidents, also called "urinary incontinence."
- VESicare has not been studied in children.

What is overactive bladder?

Overactive bladder occurs when you cannot control your bladder contractions. When these muscle contractions happen too often or cannot be controlled, you can get symptoms of overactive bladder, which are urinary frequency, urinary urgency, and urinary incontinence (leakage).

Who should NOT take VESicare?

- Do not take VESicare if you:
- are not able to empty your bladder (also called "urinary retention"),
 - have delayed or slow emptying of your stomach (also called "gastric retention"),
 - have an eye problem called "uncontrolled narrow-angle glaucoma",
 - are allergic to VESicare or any of its ingredients. See the end of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients.

What should I tell my doctor before starting VESicare?

Before starting VESicare tell your doctor or healthcare professional about all of your medical conditions including if you:

- have any stomach or intestinal problems or problems with constipation,
- have trouble emptying your bladder or you have a weak urine stream,
- have an eye problem called narrow-angle glaucoma,
- have liver problems,
- have kidney problems,
- are pregnant or trying to become pregnant (It is not known if VESicare can harm your unborn baby),
- are breastfeeding (It is not known if VESicare passes into breast milk and if it can harm your baby. You should decide whether to breastfeed or take VESicare, but not both).

Before starting on VESicare, tell your doctor about all the medicines you take including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. While taking VESicare, tell your doctor or healthcare professional about all changes in the medicines you are taking including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins and herbal supplements. VESicare and other medicines may affect each other.

How should I take VESicare?

Take VESicare exactly as prescribed. Your doctor will prescribe the dose that is right for you. Your doctor may prescribe the lowest dose if you have certain medical conditions such as liver or kidney problems.

- You should take one VESicare tablet once a day.
- You should take VESicare with liquid and swallow the tablet whole.
- You can take VESicare with or without food.
- If you miss a dose of VESicare, begin taking VESicare again the next day. Do not take 2 doses of VESicare in the same day.
- If you take too much VESicare or overdose, call your local Poison Control Center or emergency room right away.

What are the possible side effects with VESicare?

The most common side effects with VESicare are:

- blurred vision. Use caution while driving or doing dangerous activities until you know how VESicare affects you.
- dry mouth.

- constipation. Call your doctor if you get severe stomach area (abdominal) pain or become constipated for 3 or more days.
- heat prostration. Heat prostration (due to decreased sweating) can occur when drugs such as VESicare are used in a hot environment.

Tell your doctor if you have any side effects that bother you or that do not go away.

These are not all the side effects with VESicare. For more information, ask your doctor, healthcare professional or pharmacist.

How should I store VESicare?

- Keep VESicare and all other medications out of the reach of children.
- Store VESicare at room temperature, 50° to 86°F (15° to 30°C). Keep the bottle closed.
- Safely dispose of VESicare that is out of date or that you no longer need.

General information about VESicare®

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions that are not mentioned in patient information leaflets. Do not use VESicare for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give VESicare to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

This leaflet summarizes the most important information about VESicare. If you would like more information, talk with your doctor. You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about VESicare that is written for health professionals. You can also call (800) 727-7003 toll free, or visit www.VESICARE.com.

What are the ingredients in VESicare?

Active ingredient: sulfafenacin succinate
Inactive ingredients: lactose monohydrate, corn starch, hypromellose 2910, magnesium stearate, talc, polyethylene glycol 8000 and titanium dioxide with yellow ferric oxide (5 mg VESicare tablet) or red ferric oxide (10 mg VESicare tablet)

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your health GOOD ALTERNATIVE?

because of a party, up your fiber intake at breakfast (try whole-grain cereal with berries) and lunch (make a salad with beans). Also, squeeze in some fitness daily, whether it's shoveling your sidewalk or taking an extra lap around the mall while you're shopping—exercise can help make you more regular.

OOPS! TOO LATE Already constipated?

It's best to get fiber from food, but fiber supplements can also get things moving. Check the label and choose a product that lists polycarbophil as the active ingredient.

"Polycarbophil helps to produce a bowel movement without causing bloating or flatulence," explains Dr. Hoogerwerf. And don't worry—these supplements are safe for regular use. Ground flaxseed may also help (try it in cereal, yogurt, or smoothies); two tablespoons a day has been shown to relieve constipation, says Dr. Minocha.



Gut trip-up NATURE CALLS—NOW

All those large fatty meals that are so common around the holidays are hard to digest. The result? Diarrhea.

NIP IT EARLY To prevent diarrhea, keep big meals to a minimum and eat less fat. So take just a spoonful of rich mac and cheese and offset it with heaping

One third of heartburn sufferers feel the burn more than usual around the holidays.

servings of less greasy fare, like veggies. Also, ease up on alcohol, which interacts with digestive enzymes and causes loose stools. Finally, since stress can amp up colon contractions and worsen diarrhea, do one calming activity every day—take a walk, do yoga, or listen to a meditation CD.

Another common cause of holiday diarrhea is an intestinal infection from eating food that's been sitting out, says Dr. Minocha. Start your day with yogurt rich in probiotics—those beneficial bacteria may help keep your colon in check and prevent intestinal infections. "Check the ingredients label for live bacteria strains, such as *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus casei*, *Lactobacillus reuteri*, and *bifidobacteria*," he says.

OOPS! TOO LATE Drink fluids, such as water, broth, and caffeine-free sodas, and stick to a bland diet until you feel better. Not sure what's safe? Just follow the BRAT diet: bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast. Also, do a label check on low-fat or sugar-free desserts that you eat regularly; you may be consuming too much sorbitol, a sugar alcohol that is poorly absorbed by the body and can cause diarrhea, says Dr. Hoogerwerf.

REGULAR ON THE ROAD

Travel can throw off the internal clock that regulates your gut's hunger and bowel movements, says Dr. Hoogerwerf. Here's how to minimize tummy troubles when you're away from home:

1 Prep for a time zone change: For a few days prior to your departure, eat and sleep closer to the times you'll be doing so at your destination.

2 Drink a glass of water for every hour you're on the move. Dehydration is common when traveling and can lead to constipation and cramping.

3 Pack snacks so you're not tempted to buy fatty airport or gas-station fare, which can worsen intestinal problems.



LOG ON ARE YOU FEELING THE BURN? FOR MORE INFO ON HANDLING HEARTBURN, GO TO WEIGHTWATCHERS.COM/GERD.