



*“Knowing that if you have the faith of a mustard seed, your faith can move mountains”*

Cor. Redcliffe and Temple Streets | St. John’s | Antigua and Barbuda | +1 (268) 720-0418

LP 110 Las Lomas No. 2 | Via Cunupia | Trinidad and Tobago | +1 (868) 724-4898

Website: [www.nhtlh.com](http://www.nhtlh.com) Email: [info@nhtlh.com](mailto:info@nhtlh.com)

# **DIGESTIVE ACHES AND PAINS**

## **Acid Reflux, Gas, Heartburn, Hiatal Hernia, Belching and Indigestion**

**ATTENTION: Before making any changes please contact your health care professional.**

### **WHAT IS DIGESTIVE ACHES AND PAINS?**

Usually there is a balance in the stomach between the acidic gastric juices and the protective regenerative nature of the stomach lining. When this balance is thrown off, the stage is set for the development of a number of diseases, which can become chronic. Some of these conditions are an enlarged stomach, bloatedness, acid reflux, indigestion, acidosis, peptic ulcers, gastritis, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), hiatal hernia, insufficient stomach acid, stomach cancer and more.

Acid Reflux is a burning sensation in the stomach caused from indigestion or too much acid in the stomach or a backup of digestive juices in the esophagus.

If you have severe heartburn or heartburn two or more times a week, you may have a condition called GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease) and you should see your doctor. Without treatment, chronic GERD can cause inflammation, ulcers, and scarring. GERD can also lead to changes in the cells lining the esophagus. These changes raise the risk of esophageal cancer.

### **SYMPTOMS OF DIGESTIVE ACHES AND PAINS**

Ailments of the stomach may include symptoms such as: burning pain “heartburn” which may worsen after eating a meal, irritation, abdominal pain, difficulty in swallowing, increased belching, vomiting, nausea, headaches and

sometimes bleeding. When blood is digested it results in dark and tarry stools. Bad breath is a key symptom of indigestion.

## CAUSES OF DIGESTIVE ACHES AND PAINS

Fermentation and irritation of the stomach can cause indigestion and acid reflux type conditions.

Lifestyle changes will help correct these stomach problems and it would be wise therefore to practice the right habits to avoid such disturbing effects. The following principles need to be considered when seeking to resolve stomach conditions.

### **Eating too fast**

In order to secure healthy digestion, food should be eaten slowly. ...If your time to eat is limited, do not bolt your food, but eat less, and masticate slowly. ...Those who are excited, anxious, or in a hurry, would do well not to eat until they have found rest or relief; for the vital powers, already severely taxed, cannot supply the necessary digestive fluids. *Counsels on Diet and Foods (CD)* (CD p.107)

### **Food should be eaten slowly, and should be thoroughly masticated**

This is necessary, in order that the saliva may be properly mixed with the food, and the digestive fluids be called into action. (CD p.107)

### **Eating on the Go**

Always eating in a hurry? Shoveling food down is also a no-no, if you want to tame heartburn. Leslie Bonci, MPH, RD, CSSD, Director of

sports nutrition at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, says the three G's -- grab, gulp, and go -- don't make for good digestion and can make GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease) symptoms more likely. Heartburn is a GERD symptom.

Slow down when you eat if you're concerned about heartburn symptoms. At mealtime cast off all care and troubled thought; do not feel hurried, but eat slowly and with cheerfulness.

### **Overeating - this applies even to good food**

The habit of overeating, or of eating too many kinds of food at one meal, frequently causes dyspepsia (*indigestion*). (CD p.139)

Overeating also causes, digestive organs to be weakened, and diseased as well as headache, colic, excessive blood to the brain, depression and feeling of hunger.

### **Eating meals too close together**

For most people, 5 to 6 hours between meals are needed.

After the regular meal is eaten, the stomach should be allowed to rest for at least five hours. In no case should the meals be irregular. If dinner is eaten an hour or two before the usual time, the stomach is unprepared for the new burden; for it has not yet disposed of the food eaten at the previous meal, and has not vital force for new work. Thus the system is overtaxed.

Neither should the meals be delayed one or two hours, to suit circumstances, or in order that a certain amount of work may be accomplished. The stomach calls for food at the time it is accustomed to receive it. If that time is delayed, the vitality of the system decreases, and finally reaches so low an ebb that the appetite is entirely gone. If food is then taken, the stomach is unable to properly care for it. The food cannot be converted into good blood. (CD p.179)

### **Eating between meals - weakens the stomach**

Eating between meals slows the emptying of the stomach and increases hydrochloric acid. Drink only water between meals.

Not a particle of food should be introduced into the stomach till the next meal. In this interval the

stomach will perform its work, and will then be in a condition to receive more food. (CD p.179)

### **Eating a large evening meal or late at night**

Avoid late night snacks.

The stomach, when we lie down to rest, should have its work all done, that it may enjoy rest, as well as other portions of the body. The work of digestion should not be carried on through any period of the sleeping hours. (CD p.175)

### **Eating vegetables and fruits at the same meal**

Genesis 1:11 defines a fruit as: "...fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself...". Vegetables do not have seeds within themselves, but fruits do.

It is not well to eat fruit and vegetables at the same meal. If the digestion is feeble, the use of both will often cause distress, and inability to put forth mental effort. It is better to have the fruit at one meal, and the vegetables at another. Fruit and vegetables taken at one meal produce acidity of the stomach; then impurity of the blood results, and the mind is not clear because the digestion is imperfect. (CD p. 112)

### **Eating unripe or spoiled fruit**

Nicely prepared vegetables and fruits in their season will be beneficial, if they are of the best quality, not

showing the slightest sign of decay, but are sound and unaffected by any disease or decay. More die by eating decayed fruit and decayed vegetables which ferment in the stomach and result in blood poisoning, than we have any idea of. (CD p. 309)

### **Eating fruits and vegetables at the end of a meal.**

Eat raw fruits and vegetables at the very beginning of a meal, not the end of the meal as a desert as some usually do. Eating raw food before the cooked food provides digestive enzymes, which is only present in live foods and aids in digestion of protein, carbohydrate and fats. It also prevents the formation of inflammation in the intestines, which leads to inflammation in other areas of the body.

If watermelon is eaten at the start of a meal, because of its high water content, it is best to wait for at least 15 minutes before eating the rest of your meal.

### **Eating bread which was not well baked**

If the inside of your bread can be squeezed into a dough, do not eat it. New raised bread is difficult to digest and is more healthful if eaten two or three days old.

### **Use of baking soda or baking powder**

Baking soda or baking powder in bread, pastries, cakes, deserts or other items are harmful, unnecessary, causes inflammation of the stomach and often poisons the entire system. (CD p. 342)

### **Eating milk and sugar together, as in ice-cream, shakes etc.**

Sugar ferments quickly, yet is enfolded in the milk, which digests slowly.

Some individuals use milk to ease a burning stomach, as it causes the secretion of stomach acid. However galactase a form of sugar in dairy milk is often difficult to digest as well as it can cause the milk to ferment in the stomach and in time it can result in acid reflux among other health issues.

Milk and sugar.. clog the system, irritate the digestive organs and affect the brain. ... sugar and milk combined are liable to cause fermentation in the stomach, and are thus harmful. (CD p. 113)

### **Sugar**

Sugar is not good for the stomach. It causes fermentation, and this clouds the brain and brings peevishness into the disposition. Cakes, sweet puddings, pastries, jellies, jams, are active causes of indigestion. (CD p. 327)

Concentrated sugars, even good sweeteners like honey, cane juice

and molasses should be used sparingly.

### **Allergies/Gluten Sensitivity**

Some individuals can be allergic to foods high in gluten (wheat, rye, barley, spelt). This can cause malnutrition, which results in a weakened esophagus, and reduced muscle tone throughout the digestive tract.

### **Leaky Gut**

Individuals with abnormal gut flora most times have low stomach acid production. A comprehensive treatment of sealing the gut will work wonders in reversing indigestion.

### **Adrenal Gland Fatigue**

Adrenal insufficiency may also affect the digestive function, and is a major cause of GERD or IBS.

### **Undercooked coarse vegetables**

Coarse vegetables when eaten raw is difficult to digest, therefore, they should be cooked until tender. Examples are: carrots, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kale, watercress, endive or spinach.

### **Eating too much liquid food**

Too many soups are unhealthful. Frequent liquid meals weaken the stomach and places a great burden upon the kidneys. In addition, soups should rather be a stew or pureed to

avoid eating and drinking at the same meal.

### **Drinking with meals**

Drinking and eating dilutes the much needed stomach juices.

Many make a mistake in drinking cold water with their meals. Food should not be washed down. Taken with meals, water diminishes the flow of saliva; and the colder the water, the greater the injury to the stomach. Ice water or ice lemonade, taken with meals, will arrest digestion until the system has imparted sufficient warmth to the stomach to enable it to take up its work again. Masticate slowly, and allow the saliva to mingle with the food. (CD p. 106)

### **Water**

Water that is too alkaline can affect the digestive system as it keeps the PH level in the stomach too high and foods that require an acidic stomach (proteins) remain in the stomach too long thus causing fermentation and lead to nutritional deficiencies such as B<sub>12</sub> and anemia or weakening the kidneys.

### **Hot or cold food**

While it is advisable to take something warm into the stomach on mornings, hot drinks should be used for medicinal purposes and not in the diet.

The stomach is greatly injured by a

large quantity of hot food and hot drink. Thus the throat and digestive organs, and through them the other organs of the body, are enfeebled. If food is cold, the vital force of the stomach is drawn upon in order to warm it before digestion can take place. Cold drinks are injurious for the same reason; while the free use of hot drinks is debilitating. (CD p. 106)

However, for those who choose to have two meals a day, a cold drink can be used to stop the desire for a third meal - "If you feel that you must eat at night, take a drink of cold water, and in the morning you will feel much better for not having eaten." (CD p. 177)

### **Eating too great a variety at a meal**

Keep meal combinations simple, to at least two or three kinds at one meal.

Do not have too great a variety at a meal; three or four dishes are a plenty. At the next meal you can have a change. There should not be many kinds at any one meal, but all meals should not be composed of the same kinds of food without variation. (CD p. 110)

The habit of overeating, or of eating too many kinds of food at one meal, frequently causes dyspepsia (indigestion).

Serious injury is thus done to the delicate digestive organs. In vain the

stomach protests, and appeals to the brain to reason from cause to effect. The excessive amount of food eaten, or the improper combination, does its injurious work. In vain do disagreeable premonitions give warning. Suffering is the consequence. Disease takes the place of health. (CD p.111)

### **Use of Vinegar**

Mustards, mayonnaise, vegennaise, nayonnaise, vinegar, apple cider vinegar, ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, barbecue sauces, vinaigrette dressings. All these contain vinegar.

"Vinegar ferments in the stomach and the food does not digest but decays or putrefies; as a consequence, the blood is not nourished, but becomes filled with impurities, and liver and kidney difficulties appear". (CD p. 345)

### **Eating fried foods**

Foods should be prepared in a simple manner free from grease. Avoid fried food, hydrogenated fat. "Grease cooked in the food renders it difficult of digestion". (CD p. 354)

### **Use of spicy mixtures**

Hot pepper, chili, black, and white peppers have been shown to cause hemorrhaging of the stomach.

Spices irritate the tender coating of the stomach and finally destroy the natural sensitiveness of this delicate membrane. Irritating spices are

ginger, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, caraway, all spice, vinegar, and anything made with vinegar.

### **Use of Nuts**

Nuts are a great source of iron, magnesium, phosphorous, potassium, protein and fats. Not all people can tolerate nuts and if recipes were combined with nuts, they would find that it better harmonizes with them.

Peanuts need to be combined with grains to make them nourishing and digestible. In any event, do not use too large a portion of nuts.

### **Food triggers**

Some foods are known to contribute to heartburn by bringing additional acid into the stomach or by relaxing the lower esophageal sphincter. Stay away from food that may give you problems. Your symptoms may improve if you avoid tomatoes, onions, garlic, chocolate, peppermint, fatty foods, leeks, cabbage, radishes and citrus fruits, including oranges and grapefruit.

### **Drink triggers**

Beverages that cause heartburn include animal milk, coffee, tea, sodas and alcohol.

### **Chewing gum**

This causes too much air to get into the stomach and keeps stomach acids flowing, thus causing bloating,

indigestion and increasing stomach acid.

### **Avoid tight belts and tight-fitting clothes**

This prevents free action of the organs and superficial breathing is a result. Therefore the insufficient supply of oxygen is received and the waste and poisonous matter, which should be thrown off in the exhalations from the lungs, is retained, and the blood becomes impure. Those who do not wear belts and girdles have less indigestion.

### **Maintain a healthy weight**

Extra pounds put pressure on your abdomen, pushing up your stomach and causing acid to back up into your esophagus. If your weight is healthy, work to preserve it. If you are overweight or obese, work to slowly lose weight — no more than 1 or 2 pounds a week.

### **Heartburn during Pregnancy**

More than half of all pregnant women report symptoms of severe indigestion and heartburn, especially during their second and third trimesters. Changing hormone levels and increased abdominal pressures during pregnancy increase the risk of acid reflux and heartburn.

Mild symptoms should be treated with lifestyle changes, including eating at set times, avoiding fried and spicy foods, and not lying down

after a meal.

### **Don't smoke**

Smoking decreases the lower esophageal sphincter's ability to function properly. This causes acid to go up the esophagus and cause heartburn.

### **Avoid vigorous exercise immediately after a meal**

Neither study nor violent exercise should be engaged in immediately after a full meal... this hinders the digestive process; for the vitality of the system, which is needed to carry on the work of digestion, is called away to other parts. (CD p. 103)

However, to aid indigestion, take ... a short walk after a meal, with the head erect and the shoulders back, exercising moderately, is a great benefit. (CD p. 104)

### **Drugs**

Anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen and aspirin can cause stomach bleeding and prevent the healing of the gastric lining. Aspirin, steroids, anti-inflammatory drugs and smoking all increase Hydrochloric acid production which has a harmful effect on the stomach.

### **Bacteria**

Helicobacter pylori is a bacteria. It is a major player in the formation of peptic ulcers. H. pylori resides in the stomach and produces enzymes

that break down the components in the gastric mucus, thus weakening its protective effects. This can cause a hole in the stomach if it is not treated.

### **Allergies and Asthma**

This is directly related to bloating, gas, indigestion, meat eating etc. (please see our Allergies counseling sheet for further details).

### **Backflow of stomach acid**

This is caused by a malfunction of the esophageal sphincter where it is weak and unable to close completely therefore bile or food particles may flow back from the stomach up the esophagus and give the feeling of heartburn or that something is stuck in the throat.

### **Raise the Head of Your Bed**

If you experience nighttime heartburn, try placing blocks under the legs of your bed to raise the head about 6 inches, or sleep with your upper body on a wedge pillow. This strategy uses gravity to keep stomach acids where they belong. (Avoid raising your head with piles of pillows. This bends your body in a way that can aggravate heartburn.) Reflux also occurs less frequently when lying on your left side rather than your right.



## DIET FOR REVERSING DIGESTIVE ACHES AND PAINS

In addition to the above dietary pre-cautions, do practice these healthful counsels.

- Cut out all **flesh foods** (including fish, chicken, turkey, beef, pork, and all crustaceans, shrimp, lobster, crab, conch, etc.) If you are concerned about getting sufficient protein, eat beans and nuts with grain that gives the same amount of protein as from animal sources like meat, fish, eggs etc.
- All **sugars, mints and white flour** should be eliminated from the diet as they excite secretion of Hydrochloric acid that remains long in the stomach.
- Avoid **eggs, cheese, milk, butter**, etc. If you so desire to use milk, non-harmful milks can be made from a variety of nuts, grains, and legumes (i.e. almonds, cashews, rice, soy etc.) See us for recipes for nuts and grain milks as well as bean loaves and more, which can be found in the following cookbooks: It's All Good, Ten Talents, The Optimal Diet, Of These Ye May Freely Eat, Give Them Something Better and Encyclopedia of Foods and Their Healing Power vol. 3.
- **Fried foods** as well as **highly processed foods** should be eliminated from the diet, and all free oils should be avoided while cooking.
- Avoid high **salt** intake, this increases stomach irritation and ulcers.
- Use pink Himalayan sea salt that has 84 trace minerals which will help with healing the stomach.
- Avoid **carbonated drinks** (soft drinks, malt, beer, champagne) as they increase stomach acid as well as cause more air to be ingested. In addition, avoid food whipped with air (whip cream, popcorn).
- Avoid anything with **caffeine** (coffee, cola, chocolate, cocoa) as it will irritate the esophagus. Caffeine relaxes the sphincter so acid and food goes back up to the throat.
- Eat **fresh fruit** preferably to drinking fruit juice. Eating the fresh fruit provides individuals with the essential fiber needed for regular bowel movement; juice is robbed of that essential fiber.
- **Increase fiber** by eating properly cooked whole grains such as brown rice (cook for at least three hours) buckwheat or millet and lots of fruits and vegetables.

- At least 8 glasses (64oz) of **water** should be drunk each day. 16-32 oz of warm water should be taken before breakfast. Water should be taken 15 - 30 minutes before the meal or 2 hours after the meal. Please drink water until the urine is pale.

## LIFESTYLE FOR REVERSING DIGESTIVE ACHES AND PAINS

Practice the recommended lifestyle habits in the cause section above in addition to the following guidelines.

- It is absolutely important that all meals are eaten on a **regular schedule**, 7 days a week; with no more than a 30 minutes time difference in the schedule. Set your mealtime and space them at least 5-6 hours apart.
- Avoid eating in-between meals. Only water is allowed.
- Chew with your mouth closed. Do not talk while you are eating; this causes too much air to enter into the stomach, which would cause indigestion and bloating.
- Do not postpone bowel movements.
- Do not sigh as people who do tend to swallow air.
- After each meal, take a 15 to 30 minutes digestive walk to aid with digestion.
- Exercise daily by walking for one continual hour.
- Avoid lifting heavy things that puts pressure on your stomach, especially after a meal.
- Avoid all situations resulting in tension, stress, irritability, nervous strain, anger or fear. Complete rest and relaxation from pressing problems and worries is needed.
- Tips for reducing stress, include, deep breathing, listening to relaxing music, singing, spending time with positive cheerful people, developing a prayerful life and a complete trust in God for all your stressful situations.
- **Vitamin D** – Daily exposure to sunlight is beneficial. For lighter-skinned individuals, 10 to 15 minutes daily will be sufficient whereas for darker-skinned individuals, 45 minutes to 1 ½ hours daily is required between the hours of 9:00am and 3:00pm when the UVB rays is at the highest and able to assist the body in producing vitamin D.

When the stomach is too acid, it uses calcium in the body to neutralize it. This can cause calcium deficiency. Vitamin D plays a major role in calcium absorption and strengthening bones and teeth.

In treating disease, it is important that your vitamin D level is adequate. Correct Levels of vitamin D are 40 ng/mL to 100 ng/mL (once the levels get above 150 ng/mL with supplement it can become toxic to the body however if the levels get above 150 ng/mL with Natural Sunlight then you are fine.) The 25-hydroxy vitamin D test is the most accurate way to measure how much vitamin D is in your body. Once you know your level, if you need to increase it, you may consider taking 5000iu daily of vitamin D3 supplement until your levels are back in line. For the colder climate, as a regular maintenance from **June – September** use the Natural Sunlight, **May** and **October** take **1000iu** daily, **April** and **November** take **2000iu** daily, **March** and **December** take **3000iu** daily, **January** and **February** take **5000iu** daily. Do Not exceed the recommended vitamin D level. **Remember that the liquid vitamin D3 with fat is best and easily absorbed (vitamin D is a fat soluble vitamin, so it requires fat in order for it to be absorbed).**

[If you live in a warmer climate please use the natural sunlight \(45-90 minutes daily between the hours of 9:00am – 3:00pm\).](#)

**PS: If you are deficient in vitamin D, then you will need to take the prescription dosage or the equivalent of 50,000ius per week for 8 weeks of supplemental vitamin D3.**

***Here is another option: If there is a chronic deficiency in vitamin D, it would recommended that you take as much as 10,000iu daily for either 3-4 months, then you can revert to the 5000iu daily.***

## HERBAL REMEDIES FOR REVERSING DIGESTIVE ACHES AND PAINS

- Use the inside of **Aloes** – 1oz of the flesh to 1oz **water**. Blend and drink 30 minutes before a meal. **Aloes powder** – 1 tablespoon to 2 ounces of water, mix well and drink 30 minutes before a meal. **This will coat, heal and calm the burning of the stomach.**
- **Olive oil is healing to an inflamed, irritated stomach.** Take 2 teaspoons of cold-pressed olive oil at the before a meal.
- **Marshmallow root:** 1 to 2 tablespoons root to 4 cups of water, boil for 15 minutes and draw for 4 hours or 6 – 8 capsules before each meal or combo with Marshmallow with Slippery Elm 4 capsules each before meals.

- **Activated Charcoal** – 1 tablespoon to 4 oz water, 30 minutes before meals. If not on medication.
- **Betaine HCl with Pepsin and Digestive Enzymes and Probiotic (PB8 or Prescript Assist or Bio Kult)** for lactose intolerance, PB8 will be better.
- **Gastritis, Heartburn:** make raw cabbage juice and drink (caution: can make under active thyroid worse or make sure to use Kelp). Options are: ginger, chamomile, slippery elm, marshmallow, flaxseed, dill, fennel, angelica, peppermint, lemon balm, basil, oregano.
- **Heartburn, Acidosis:** Papaya, pineapple, aloe vera, ginger, peppermint, basil, oregano, lemon, licorice root (*Warning: Don't take licorice root if you have High Blood Pressure* **Please read special notes at the end**).
- **Flatulence, Gas, Bloating:** orange peel, lemon balm, spearmint, ginger, anise, caraway, fennel seed, dill, horsebalm, sage, thyme. Use: 1 tablespoon to each 8oz cup of hot water and steep. Or Activated Charcoal - 1 tablespoon to 4 oz water, in between meals, follow with two glasses water. If not on medication.
- **Belching:** 1 tablespoon cardamom to 8oz water, boil for 15 minutes and drink it very warm.
- **Insufficient stomach acid:** indicators are burping, belching, and bloating. From the age of 35, the stomach produces less stomach acid but it is essential to have sufficient stomach acid to absorb protein, carbohydrates and calcium or produce B<sub>12</sub>. Take lemon juice 15 minutes before a meal. To increase stomach gastric juice secretion, use **NuTriVene Betaine HCl with Pepsin**, gentian, angelica, St. benedict thistle or pineapple. (Natural Remedies Encyclopedia p. 351)
- **Excess stomach acid:** indicators are burning sensation in the stomach, heartburn, reflux disease. Use a few nuts at the beginning of a meal to work on stomach juices. Avoid citrus, vinegar, cranberries or plums.
- **Fruit and vegetables:**
  - **Use a mono-diet** – keep the meals simple. i.e. single item fruit or vegetable per meal.
  - Do not use more than two to three botanical families of fruits or vegetables at the same meal. Simplicity is key to food mixtures. **It is best when treating stomach conditions to use a mono diet in relation to their botanical family: Meaning one family of either fruits or vegetables,**

**but never at the same meal. The legumes, nuts, seeds and grains family can be combined together and the stomach treats them as one. For more details on food combinations, see our book, “365 Total Wellness”.**

**Example of botanical fruit families:**

- Mango, spondias, grandaria
- Sour sop, custard apple, sugar apple, pawpaw, cherimoya
- Pineapple
- Papaya
- Kiwi
- Watermelon, honey dew, cantaloupe
- Cranberry, blueberry, bilberry
- Banana, plantain, finger rose, bugament (Froggy Banana)
- Plum, peach, apple, pear, apricot, blackberry, raspberry
- Orange, grapefruit, lemon, lime, tangerine

**Instructions for preparing teas**

- Hard parts of the plant such as: roots, seeds, rhizome or bark: BOIL for 15 minutes, and then draw for 4 hours.
- Delicate parts of the plant such as: leaves, flowers, buds, stems or clusters: bring water to a boil then DRAW/STEEP for 3 hours.
- For combinations: boil hard parts first for 15 minutes then add delicate parts and draw/steep for 4 hours.
- Drink as water through the day.

**Side Effects and Cautions of Licorice Root**

- **While licorice promotes the healing of the stomach, it should not be used for more than 7 days at a time.**
- **In large amounts, licorice containing glycyrrhizin can cause high blood pressure, salt and water retention, and low potassium levels, which could lead to heart problems.**
- **People with heart disease or high blood pressure should be cautious about using licorice.**
- **The safety of using licorice as a supplement for more than 4 to 6 weeks has not been thoroughly studied.**

- **Taking licorice together with diuretics (water pills), corticosteroids, or other medicines that reduce the body's potassium levels could cause dangerously low potassium levels.**
- **When taken in large amounts, licorice can affect the body's levels of a hormone called cortisol and related steroid drugs, such as prednisone.**
- **Pregnant women should avoid using licorice as a supplement or consuming large amounts of licorice as food, as some research suggests it could increase the risk of preterm labor.**