

LESSON 9

Heartburns (1)



Conversation

Situation: A patient (Mr. Wilson) returns to a doctor's practice for advice on a recurring problem (heartburn).

"What can I do for you?" is similar in meaning to "How can I help you?" and is an effective way of asking a person to explain their problem.

Mr. Wilson uses the words "same old thing" to mean that his current problem (heartburn) has been giving him trouble for a long period of time.

"Progress" means improvement, eg: "I just don't seem to be making any progress at all".

Mr. Wilson's heartburn seems to be getting worse rather than better, "I'm worse in fact." The doctor, at this point realizes that action needs to be taken and tells Mr. Wilson "Let me ask you a few questions, just to see if we've missed something, or to see if you've left anything out."

Medical words:

heartburn
notes

Possible problematic words:

worse
seem
progress
missed
anything

Activity

Fill in the gaps with correct answers from the box. Do you agree with each statement? Why? Why not?

ignorance illness overcome remedies treatment

Whenever the is too strong for the available , the physician surely must not expect that it can be by medicine. To attempt futile is to display an that is allied to madness. Hippocrates [460-375 BC]

When billed filled heirs pilled

at last we are sure you've been properly , then a few paper forms must be properly so that you and your may be properly . Theodore Geisel (Dr. Seuss) (1986)

a few become can feverish have more
than not rather
than several so soaring to

Heatwaves happen suddenly.
Acclimatising heat can cause problems only for patients who are elderly or ill with virus infections and already , but also for fit people who can quickly exhausted and unwell.
It takes days to get used to temperatures in the sun and of my holiday-going patients cooked themselves in the first few days, staying in the sun for no an hour.

afford touched wonderful

My doctor is . Once in 1955, when I couldn't an operation, he up the X-rays. Joey Bishop

Reading & Discussion

A Word with the DOCTOR
by: Dr. John Winsor

HEARTBURNS

"I KEEP getting chest pains, doctor!" is a common enough **complaint** from my patients.

The pain they are most worried about is the one that strikes them in the center of the chest underneath the breastbone because they think they are having a heart attack.

The good news is that it is usually heartburn, which has nothing to do with the heart itself. It is a special type of **indigestion** where acid from the stomach is **regurgitated** upwards into the food pipe or **esophagus**.

The environment in the esophagus is **alkaline**, so the excess acid burns the lining. As this tube shares some of the same nerves as the heart, pain is often 'referred' to the area around the heart - hence the name and the fear

that it is more serious than indigestion.

Without a doctor to advise you, it is very difficult to tell which is a heart pain and which is heartburn.

The symptoms of heartburn are a pain or burning sensation behind the breastbone. This may or may not be associated with regurgitation of food or liquid into the back of the throat or mouth. The fluid may be acid to the taste or watery and **regurgitation** is more likely to occur when you bend down.

The most common cause of this is a weak muscle at the junction of the **gullet** and stomach - normally, this muscle stops the **reflux** of acid from the stomach. For overweight people, the act of bending down squeezes the stomach and excess fat around the stomach, forcing food and acid in the wrong direction.

If you want to prevent heartburn - then don't smoke or drink alcohol - they are both **irritants** and tend to increase the amount of acid your stomach produces - and don't eat late at night, or you'll go to bed and lie flat with a **distended** stomach that's busy making acid to digest the food.

Very fatty, spicy or cold foods may well make matters worse. Avoid coffee, cucumbers, onions or anything else which you find brings on heartburn and don't wear tight belts or clothes, which will squeeze you just in the right place to bring on the symptoms of heartburn.

Do eat smaller- meals and try to lose a few pounds if you are overweight. Also, take care when you bend down - if you keep your back straight, you won't squash the contents up and out of your stomach.

Vocabulary:

- **complaint** - An expression of pain, dissatisfaction, or resentment
- **indigestion** - Inability to digest or difficulty in digesting something, especially food
- **regurgitate** - to vomit forth (partially digested food);
- **esophagus** - the passage of food from the pharynx to the stomach
- **alkaline** - relating to or containing an alkali; having a pH greater than 7
- **regurgitation** - The return of partially digested food from the stomach to the mouth.
- **gullet** - The esophagus; the throat
- **reflux** - A flowing back
- **irritants** - something that causes irritation and annoyance
- **distended** – expanded; swollen

Reference:

<http://www.englishmed.com/>

