

TOBACCO EXAMINER

A Monthly Newsletter of Writers Against Aids and Tobacco Smoking

April Edition

Heartburn

Heartburn, condition characterized by a burning feeling in the chest and a sour or bitter taste in the mouth (*see* Digestive System). Heartburn typically develops when the acidic contents of the stomach flow back, or regurgitate, into the esophagus, the muscular tube that carries food from the throat to the stomach. Approximately one in ten adults experiences heartburn once a week. Heartburn is more common in pregnant women because of the pressure the expanding uterus exerts on the stomach.

Normally the contents of the stomach are held in place by the lower esophageal sphincter, a muscle at the lower end of the esophagus that allows food to pass into the stomach. If this muscle relaxes, or is too weak, the food can flow out of the stomach and back into the esophagus.

There are several reasons why the esophageal sphincter may relax. Substances found in some spicy foods, alcohol, or in cigarettes may cause the muscle to relax. Overeating or being overweight can increase pressure in the abdomen and stomach enough to weaken the muscle of the sphincter. In addition, the sphincter may be affected by a hiatal hernia, a condition in which a portion of the stomach protrudes through the same opening in the diaphragm that the esophagus passes through to connect to the stomach. Some medicines can weaken the lower esophageal sphincter, encouraging heartburn. These include oral contraceptives, asthma medications, and some heart medications.

Heartburn is generally diagnosed with a complete description of the symptoms. In severe cases, a physician may order a barium X ray of the stomach and esophagus to rule out other problems. Alternatively, a physician may examine the esophagus with an endoscope, an instrument that can view the interior of the digestive tract, and take tissue and fluid samples.

There are several treatments for heartburn. In mild cases, over-the-counter medications such as antacids can relieve occasional bouts. Chronic heartburn can be treated with medications that prevent the production of acid in the stomach. Several of these medicines are now sold over the counter; others are available only by prescription.

Lifestyle changes, such as quitting smoking or losing weight, also can alleviate or prevent heartburn. Sleeping with the head of the bed elevated 15 cm (6 in) helps prevent the stomach's contents from flowing back into the esophagus. Going to bed on an empty stomach, and cutting back on consumption of alcohol, fat, chocolate, and peppermint also can prevent heartburn.

William Lloyd Garrison

William Lloyd Garrison (1805-79), American abolitionist, who founded the influential antislavery newspaper *The Liberator*.

Garrison was born December 10, 1805, in Newburyport, Massachusetts. Indentured at the age of 14 to the owner of the *Newburyport Herald*, he became an expert printer. The struggles of oppressed peoples for freedom engaged his sympathies in his youth. In articles written anonymously or under the pseudonym Aristides, in the *Herald* and other newspapers, he attempted to arouse Northerners from their apathy on the question of slavery in the U.S.

In 1829 Garrison entered into partnership with the American antislavery agitator Benjamin Lundy to publish a monthly periodical, the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, in Baltimore, Maryland. Lundy believed in gradual emancipation, and Garrison at first shared his views; but he soon became convinced that immediate and complete emancipation was necessary. Because Baltimore was then a center of the domestic slave trade in the U.S., Garrison's eloquent denunciations of the trade aroused great animosity. A slave trader sued him for libel; he was fined, and, lacking funds to pay the fine, was jailed. After his release from prison Garrison dissolved his partnership with Lundy and returned to New England. In partnership with another American abolitionist, Isaac Knapp, Garrison launched *The Liberator* in Boston in 1831; the newspaper became one of the most influential journals in the United States.

Garrison was also a pacifist and involved in other reform movements. He was deeply convinced that slavery had to be abolished by moral force. He appealed through *The Liberator* and through his speeches, especially those to the clergy, for a practical application of Christianity in demanding freedom for the slaves. His campaign aroused great opposition. The state of Georgia offered (1831) a reward of \$5000 for his arrest and conviction under Georgia law, and he received hundreds of abusive letters, many of which threatened him with assassination. Undaunted, he helped to organize the New England Anti-Slavery Society in 1832; the next year, after a trip to England, where he enlisted the aid of abolitionist sympathizers, he played a leading role in establishing the national American Anti-Slavery Society, of which he was president from 1843 until 1865.

As Garrison's demands on the Northern clergy went unheeded and his attacks on them increased, opposition to his policy developed within abolitionist ranks. A further cause of dissension was Garrison's advocacy of equal rights for women generally and especially within the abolitionist movement. The cleavage was still further increased when Garrison later became convinced that the slavery clauses of the U.S. Constitution were immoral and that, consequently, it was equally immoral to take an oath in support of the Constitution. In 1840 he publicly burned a copy of the federal Constitution and denounced it as "a covenant with Death and an agreement with Hell"; he chose as his motto "No union with slaveholders" and, still true to his pacifist beliefs, advocated peaceful separation of the free states from the slave states.

With the outbreak of the American Civil War, he predicted the victory of the North and the end of slavery, and he ceased to advocate disunion. Promulgation (1863) of the Emancipation Proclamation by Abraham Lincoln removed the last difference between Garrison and Lincoln, and Lincoln paid public tribute to Garrison's long and uncompromising struggle to abolish slavery. In 1865, after the de facto abolition of slavery, Garrison discontinued *The Liberator* and advocated dissolution of the antislavery societies.

He then became prominent in campaigns by reformers to promote free trade and abolish customhouses on a world scale; to achieve suffrage for American women and justice for Native Americans; and to establish Prohibition and eliminate the consumption of tobacco in the U.S. He died in New York City on May 24, 1879.

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