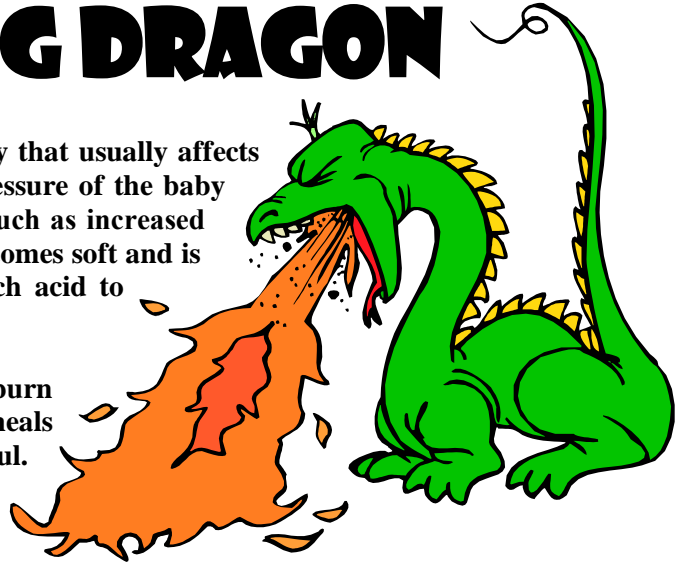


# **HEARTBURN... TAMING THE FIRE-BREATHING DRAGON**

**H**earthburn is a common discomfort of pregnancy that usually affects women after the first trimester. Due to the pressure of the baby on mother's stomach and hormonal changes, such as increased production of relaxin, the lower esophageal sphincter becomes soft and is not allowed to completely close, thus, allowing stomach acid to flow back up into the esophagus.

There are several lifestyle changes to consider if heartburn is a problem for you. Eating smaller, more frequent meals and avoiding spicy and greasy foods can often be helpful. Try to sleep in a more upright position, and avoid lying down within an hour of eating.



## **HERBS —**

**Slippery Elm** - This plant can be found in several forms at health food stores, and is derived from the inner bark of the Slippery Elm tree. It coats and protects mucus membranes inflamed from stomach acid. The powdered form can be added to boiled water (1 tsp. to 1 cup) to make a soothing tea, added to milk, or sprinkled on food. Lozenges are also effective.

**Fennel** - this herb reduces heartburn by inhibiting muscle spasms in the digestive tract. Fennel is effective when taken in capsule or tablet form (follow directions on label), or by drinking an infusion. Steep 1 tsp. Crushed fennel seeds in one cup of boiling water for 15 minutes. It is most effective when drunk a few minutes prior to eating, but can also be consumed after the meal.

**Peppermint, Spearmint & Wintergreen** – mild herbal teas (cold or hot) made with one or more of these herbs help relieve digestive disorders and complaints. Sip on a cup of tea sweetened with a bit of honey.

## **FOODS —**

**Papaya/ Pineapple** - contains digestive enzymes. The fruits can be eaten fresh, or the enzymes taken in tablet form. Oddly enough, the tablets can be found in most dollar stores.

**Umeboshi Plums** - Dried, salted umeboshi plums from Japan, available from health-food stores, are a great aid to digestion. A tea made from one cup of boiled water and one umeboshi plum can be flavored with tamari and drunk hot or cold.

## **Other** -

Drinking 1 tbs. honey in a glass of warm milk or eating yogurt can have a soothing effect on the throat. Papaya Enzyme, Multi-Enzyme, and Bromaline (pineapple enzyme) offer great results for some moms.

## **HOMEOPATHY —**

**Mercurius Solubilis** - 6C 3x's daily;

**Arsenicum 6C** - 6C three times daily, stopping when symptoms start to improve;

**Natrum Phosphoricum** - 6C three times daily, stopping when symptoms start to improve.

**IF** all of the remedies and suggestions mentioned above have little or no effect in the battle to control your heartburn, using an over the counter antacid that contains magnesium trisilicate is an acceptable last resort. This ingredient neutralizes acid in the stomach and esophagus and is NOT absorbed into the bloodstream. Avoid antacids that contain cimetidine, ranitidine, and famotidine. They ARE absorbed into the bloodstream and thus cross the placenta and get to your baby.