

The Hiatal Hernia Plan

Six signs, three treatment paths, and what to change before medicine

✓ **Verified against published guidance** from Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic and Harvard Health - sources below

Harvard Health says to call your doctor immediately if heartburn comes with nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath, palpitations, dizziness or an irregular heartbeat, because these may be signs of a heart problem rather than a digestive one. Mayo Clinic adds that vomiting blood or passing black stools could mean bleeding in the digestive tract, and is a reason to be seen.



Do This

Check the six signs

- Heartburn and chest pain
- Burping, swallowing, hoarseness
- Early fullness and indigestion

COACH'S TIP Cleveland Clinic lists all six.

Eat smaller and earlier

- Smaller, more frequent meals
- Sit up an hour after eating
- Nothing for two hours before bed

COACH'S TIP Harvard Health names all three.

Change how you sleep

- Raise the head of the bed
- Do not lie down after eating
- Sleep on your left side

COACH'S TIP Cleveland Clinic: both moves help.

Know the three paths

- Wait and watch
- Surgical repair
- Medication

COACH'S TIP Ask which one you are on, and why.

Lower the pressure

- Treat the chronic cough
- Ease off the heavy lifting
- Do not strain on the toilet

COACH'S TIP Cleveland Clinic names these causes.

Take chest pain seriously

- Reflux can mimic a heart attack
- Do not self diagnose
- An ECG is a reasonable ask

COACH'S TIP Harvard Health: the symptoms overlap.



Do Not

Do not assume surgery

- Fewer than 5% need it
- Watching is a real plan
- Most need no treatment at all

COACH'S TIP Harvard Health gives the figure.

Do not expect it to vanish

- Hernias do not go away
- No symptoms can mean no treatment
- They usually grow slowly

COACH'S TIP Cleveland Clinic, on both counts.

Do not live on antacids

- Occasional use is fine
- They do not shrink the hernia
- Daily use needs a prescription

COACH'S TIP Cleveland Clinic: book, do not self treat.

Do not call surgery permanent

- 90% success rate
- A repeat repair is possible
- Up to 50% return over years

COACH'S TIP Cleveland Clinic, long term studies.

Do not ignore swallowing trouble

- A lump when you swallow
- Persistent heartburn too
- Food catching on the way down

COACH'S TIP Harvard Health: call about these.

Do not skip weight and smoking

- Both raise the risk
- Coughing adds pressure
- Smoking weakens the valve

COACH'S TIP Mayo Clinic and Cleveland Clinic agree.

THE NUMBERS BEHIND THIS SHEET

Three figures worth knowing

Fewer than 5%

Share who require surgery
(Harvard Health)

95%

Share that are the sliding type (Cleveland
Clinic)

50% over 50

How common they become with age
(Cleveland Clinic)