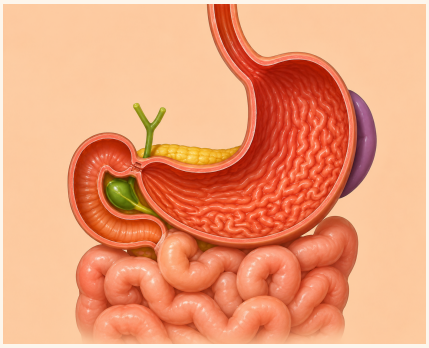
Gastritis Diet Guide

A printable reference for foods that commonly trigger gastritis symptoms. This is general guidance, not a prescription — consult your physician or a registered dietitian for advice specific to you, especially if symptoms are severe, persistent, or you take medication for acid reflux or ulcers.



What Is Gastritis?

Gastritis means the lining of your stomach is irritated or inflamed. Think of that lining as a protective coat that keeps your stomach's own digestive acid from touching the stomach wall underneath. When that coat gets worn down — by infection, certain medications, or certain foods and drinks — the acid can irritate the stomach directly. That's what causes the burning pain, bloating, nausea, or early fullness people with gastritis feel.

Why food matters: some foods and drinks make the stomach produce more acid than usual, or relax the valve that normally keeps acid down in the stomach. Others directly scrape or irritate the lining while it's already inflamed. Avoiding these triggers gives the lining a chance to calm down and heal, while regular medical treatment (such as for H. pylori infection, if present) addresses the underlying cause.[1–5]

Foods & Drinks to Avoid With Gastritis

■■ **Spicy Foods & Hot Seasonings**
Chili peppers, hot sauce, hot curry pastes, cayenne, and heavily peppered dishes. Capsaicin and other spice compounds increase gastric acid secretion and irritate an already-inflamed lining.[1,2]

■ **Citrus Fruits, Juices & Tomatoes**
Oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit and their juices; tomatoes, tomato juice, pasta and pizza sauce. Their high natural acidity irritates the stomach lining directly.[1]

■ **Coffee & Caffeinated Tea**
Regular and decaffeinated coffee, black and green tea with caffeine, and energy drinks. Coffee stimulates gastric acid and gastrin release regardless of caffeine content.[5]

■ **Carbonated (Fizzy) Drinks**
Soda, sparkling water with added sugar, and other carbonated beverages. The carbonation distends the stomach and increases pressure on the valve above it, worsening irritation.[1]

■ **Alcohol**
Beer, wine, and spirits of any kind. Alcohol directly damages the protective mucus layer and is linked to a significantly higher risk of gastric irritation and disease with regular use.[4]

■ **Fried & Fatty Foods**
Fried chicken, French fries, deep-fried snacks, fatty cuts of meat, cream-based sauces, and full-fat dairy. High-fat meals delay stomach emptying, prolonging acid exposure.[1]

■ **Processed, Cured & Smoked Meats**
Bacon, sausage, deli meats, hot dogs, and smoked meats. These are high in fat and preservatives linked to increased gastric inflammation.[1]

■ **Heavily Salted & Pickled Foods**
Salted snacks, canned soups high in sodium, pickled vegetables, and salt-cured foods. Excess salt damages the stomach's surface cells and worsens inflammation.[1]

■ **Sweets, Pastries & Refined Sugar**
Candy, pastries, cookies, and sugary desserts. Diets high in added sugar are associated with greater gastric inflammation and symptom frequency.[1,2]

■ **Chocolate**
Chocolate and cocoa-based desserts or drinks. Chocolate relaxes the lower esophageal valve and can worsen acid irritation.[1]

■ **Raw Garlic, Onion & Mint (in large amounts)**
Raw garlic, raw onion, and peppermint or mint-flavored foods, eaten in large quantities, can relax the valve above the stomach and trigger symptoms in sensitive individuals.[1]

■ **Barbecued & Smoky-Flavored Foods**
Charcoal-grilled and barbecued dishes. Along with fried and salty snacks, these were among the food types most strongly linked to stomachache and bloating in gastritis patients.[2]

Meal Timing & Eating Habits

Research shows meal timing is not a minor detail — it's one of the strongest diet-related risk factors identified for gastritis. In a controlled study, people who ate their meals **2 or more hours later or earlier** than their usual time were **6 to 13 times more likely** to have gastritis or gastritis with H. pylori infection than those who kept consistent meal times, and the risk rose further when this happened twice a week or more.[3] A separate study of gastritis patients found that eating too fast, irregular mealtimes, and irregular meal sizes were among the habits most strongly linked to stomachache and bloating.[2]

Practical targets based on this evidence:
• Eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner at roughly the **same clock times every day** (within about an hour) — for example, 7–8 AM, 12–1 PM, and 6–7 PM.
• Don't skip breakfast or routinely push lunch past 2 PM or dinner past 8 PM; long, irregular gaps between meals were linked to the highest risk.[3]
• If a busy schedule makes a full meal impossible at the usual time, eat a small, non-trigger snack (such as a banana or plain crackers) to avoid a long empty-stomach gap.
• Eat slowly and in moderate portions rather than one or two very large meals; smaller, steadier meals reduce the pressure and acid load on an irritated stomach.[2]
• Avoid lying down or going to bed within 2–3 hours of eating.

References

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