Tea and Acid Reflux

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Tea and acid reflux, in short:** peppermint and strong caffeinated tea can make reflux worse; gentle low-caffeine herbals like chamomile are kinder. Tea is comfort, not a cure.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in May 2026.

If you get heartburn or acid reflux, the cup you choose matters. Peppermint and strong black or green tea can aggravate symptoms; gentler, low-caffeine herbals are the safer choice. None of it treats the underlying cause.

Why peppermint can make reflux worse

Menthol relaxes smooth muscle, including the lower oesophageal sphincter, the valve that keeps stomach acid where it belongs. A looser valve lets acid travel back up, so peppermint and spearmint can worsen heartburn and reflux. If you have reflux, skip the mint. See Wikipedia: peppermint and Wikipedia: gastro-oesophageal reflux disease.

Caffeine and acidity

Strong black and green tea contain caffeine, which can relax the same valve and is a recognised trigger for some people. If tea sets you off, drink it weaker, earlier in the day, with food rather than on an empty stomach, and not in the hours before lying down. The NHS guide to heartburn and acid reflux lists caffeine among common triggers.

Gentler cups

- **Chamomile.** Mild and soothing; a sensible low-caffeine default.
- **Ginger, in small amounts.** Settling for many, but large, strong brews can irritate, so keep it gentle.
- **Marshmallow root or slippery elm.** Traditional demulcents that coat the throat; evidence is limited but they are gentle.

Liquorice tea is a traditional reflux soother but can raise blood pressure with regular use, so treat it with caution.

What helps more than the tea

- Smaller, slower meals
- Avoid lying down for about three hours after eating
- Raise the head of the bed
- Identify and cut your trigger foods
- Lose excess weight if relevant

At a glance

Tea	Effect on reflux
Peppermint / spearmint	Can worsen; relaxes the valve
Strong black / green	Can worsen in some (caffeine)
Chamomile	Gentle, soothing
Ginger (small amount)	Usually fine, keep it weak
Fennel	Gentle

FAQ

Is peppermint tea bad for reflux? It can make it worse, because menthol relaxes the valve that holds acid down.

Best tea for reflux? A weak, low-caffeine herbal such as chamomile.

Does tea cure heartburn? No. It is comfort alongside the habits above, not a treatment.

When should I see a GP? If reflux is frequent, lasts more than three weeks, or comes with difficulty swallowing or unintended weight loss, see a GP. Persistent reflux needs proper assessment.

This is general information, not medical advice. Persistent or severe reflux should be checked by a GP or pharmacist.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Try the cheapest plain version of the style first. Upgrade only after you've decided you like the style.

Sources

- NHS: heartburn and acid reflux
- Wikipedia: gastro-oesophageal reflux disease
- Wikipedia: peppermint

Part of: Tea for Digestion

- Tea & digestion (overview)
- Tea & bloating and wind
- Tea & nausea and upset stomach
- Tea & IBS
- Tea & gastritis

Shop gentle, low-caffeine teas in the herbal & fruit range (chamomile, ginger, fennel) or browse the full tea shop (free UK postage over £35).

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
- Loose leaf vs teabag

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