**WELTON FAMILY HEALTH CENTRE**

**What can I do about?**

**Heartburn and Indigestion**

**Heartburn and indigestion are common symptoms which usually do not have a serious cause. Initially they may be treated by simple remedies which may be obtained over the counter and by changes in lifestyle.**

1. **Try using simple antacid remedies which may be bought from the pharmacy. These may include drugs such as Gaviscon, Tums, Rennies.**
2. **Avoid eating foods which may make the problem worse. These include fatty foods, alcohol, and spicy foods.**
3. **Smoking, increased weight, and going to bed soon after a heavy meal may all contribute to heartburn and indigestion. Try and eat small meals frequently rather than large meals or going for prolonged periods without food.**
4. **Make a note of any food or drink which appears to make the problem worse and avoid them. If you feel that a prescribed medication is making the problem worse than make an appointment to discuss this with the GP.**
5. **Heartburn which is worse when you lie flat or bend down may be helped by raising the top end of the bed by about 8 inches by using blocks under the top end – make sure this is stable!**
6. **Cimetidine which may also be bought over the counter may also help with the symptoms of heartburn.**

**You need to make an appointment to see the GP if :**

1. **You have persistent symptoms which have lasted for several weeks**
2. **You have any difficulty swallowing**
3. **You have persistent vomiting**
4. **You have unexplained weight loss or loss of appetite.**
5. **Associated shortness of breath or persistent cough.**