

Practice 2

Section B

[10 marks]

[Time suggested: 25 minutes]

Question 16-25

Read the following text and answer the questions that follow.

WHAT IS ACID REFLUX?

Our stomach is a highly acidic place. Parietal cells in the stomach wall produce hydrochloric acid, a strong acid with a pH of 1.5 to 3, to break down the food we consume. This acid is so concentrated that if you were to place a drop on a piece of wood, it would eat right through it.

Then, there is a muscular ring, called the oesophageal sphincter muscle, which lies between the end of the oesophagus (the food pipe which transports food from our mouth down to our stomach) and the beginning of the stomach. It acts as a valve to keep stomach acid in the stomach. However, due to the effects of certain foods and lifestyle factors, this muscle may sometimes not function well enough to prevent gastric acid from flowing up into the oesophagus. When this happens, it causes burning pain as the acid erodes the oesophageal wall. This is known as acid reflux or heartburn.

A recent survey conducted by the National Heartburn Alliance in the US revealed that 92 percent of frequent heartburn sufferers point to food as the primary cause of digestive discomfort. The key to preventing acid reflux is to minimize or avoid ingestion of certain foods including

Chocolate – Bad news for chocolate lovers. Chocolate seems to cause more reflux than any other food due to its caffeine, cocoa and high fat content.

Coffee and tea – high levels of caffeine in coffee and tea lead to increased secretion of gastric acid in stomach which may cause acid reflux.

Carbonated drinks – Soft drink, energy drinks or carbonated water such as Perrier increase pressure levels in the stomach, which in turn increases the acidic response.

Mint – Peppermint relaxes the sphincter muscle allowing stomach acids to flow back into the oesophagus.

Prevention Methods

Lose weight if you are obese – Obesity is the leading cause of acid reflux as extra stomach fat places pressure on your abdomen, pushing gastric juices up into your oesophagus.

Do not smoke – nicotine has a relaxing effect on the oesophagus sphincter muscle and interferes with the process of saliva effectively clearing acid out of the oesophagus.

Avoid tight clothing at abdominal area – Snug clothing puts pressure on the stomach and worsen the discomfort and pain.

Questions 16 – 25

Using the information from the text, complete the table below.

ACID REFLUX	
Acidic pH scale	16
Effect of acid on wood	17
Muscular ring	Oesophageal sphincter muscle
Causes	18 19
Food that causes discomfort	20 21 22 23
Precautionary means	24 25