

Sawbones 124: Heartburn

Published February 19, 2016
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Intro (Clint McElroy):

Sawbones is a show about medical history and nothing the hosts say should be taken as medical advice or opinion. It's for fun. Can't you just have fun for an hour and not try to diagnose your mystery boil? We think you've earned it. Just sit back, relax, and enjoy a moment of distraction from that weird growth. You're worth it.

[theme music plays]

Justin:

Hello everybody and welcome to Sawbones: A Marital Tour of Misguided Medicine. I am your cohost Justin McElroy.

Sydnee:

And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Justin:

Uh, Sydnee, this is a, uh— Momentous is probably too strong of a word, but that's the one I'm gonna use. This is a momentous day in Sawbones history.

Sydnee:

It is?

Justin:

One of— For one of the first times ever, we may have pretended that it, this is the case but...

Sydnee:

I legitimately don't know what Justin's about to say. Usually, we're setting this up as some sort of like joke, like, "Oh, it is? Well, tell me about it, Justin." I really don't know what he's about to say and I'm quite frankly horrified.

Justin:

It's not a joke. This is the first time, you told me what the topic is for this week. And this is the first time I am, like, I am suffering from the malady we are discussing as we are discussing it literally.

Sydnee:

Oh, okay.

Justin:

I'm, like, living in this.

Sydnee:

And, uh, and that's probably true.

Justin:

And as of the—

Sydnee:

That's fair. That's— This isn't an imagined thing that you have, like, fear—

Justin:

No.

Sydnee:

Been so afraid of that you now are manifesting psychosomatic symptoms. Like, you really have this.

Justin:

The third host of this show, Mr. Tumness, my tummy, is not having a fun time right now.

Sydnee:

No.

Justin:

A sad, bad time.

Sydnee:

What happened? Just, did you make some bad choices?

Justin:

I made some...

Sydnee:

Did you make some bad decisions?

Justin:

...lamb and burger arepas, I believe is the pronunciation. It's a Lebanese dish I've been led to believe by the fine people of Blue Apron. Some arepas and...

Sydnee:

Arajas.

Justin:

Arajas?

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

Well, there's arepas too. Right?

Sydnee:

That is a thing, but that is not what we had for dinner. [laughing]

Justin:

They look sort of like what we ate.

Sydnee:

They do, but I think it's a, it's a different, like, it—

Justin:

These were pitas with lamb and—

Sydnee:

This didn't have a P in it. [laughing]

Justin:

It didn't have any P in it, guaranteed. Um, I have heartburn.

Sydnee:

Yes. Well, and not to say there's anything wrong with the product.

Justin:

No, I...

Sydnee:

No.

Justin:

A lot of it is how I eat too fast and a lot of it's that I don't eat throughout the day and a lot of it is I have heartburn every single night of my adult life since I hit 30 years old.

Sydnee:

Well, Justin—

Justin:

It always happens, it never fails.

Sydnee:

I can— I cannot only sympathize, I can empathize because, while I don't have heartburn at the moment, thank you Famotidine, I do often have heartburn and have ever since pregnancy. Thank you, Charlie. Um, and you know, we're not alone.

Justin:

I would hope not. If it was some weird disorder that only we had, that would be very distressing.

Sydnee:

No, it's estimated some, maybe, like, 60 million people have heartburn, maybe more. Lots of people have heartburn, heartburn is a very common illness. It's more common now in the industrialized age than it used to be. Um, but I think everybody has probably suffered from a little bit of heartburn at some point in their life, even if they don't have it all the time.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

So, let's talk about it.

Justin:

Okay. How is it— It's an old thing I assume.

Sydnee:

It is an old thing. First of all, thank you, Jeremy, for suggesting this topic. And thank you, Justin, for getting heartburn.

Justin:

Mm-hmm. And making you think of it.

Sydnee:

Yeah. Um, and me because I actually had heartburn and that's what made me think, "You know what? We should do an episode on it because I have heartburn again." Uh, heartburn has been around a long time. Even though, as I said, it's probably a lot more common now. Uh, the first mentions of it date back to, like, 3,000 B.C., um, when King Darius the 1st of Persia had his personal doc, one of his generals, so he was— There was, like, a war going on and they were trying to take over, like, Greek citystates.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

And one of his, like, super important generals, like main man, right hand man kind of guys wasn't able to do his job very well because he had heartburn. So, he had his doctors, like, "Check out my General and fix his

heartburn." Although, they didn't call it heartburn yet. "Fix whatever's wrong with him so that he can get back out there on the battlefield and do a good job." And, uh, they came up with, the recommendation they came up with was elevating the head of his bed.

Justin:

It seems, like, not that, considering I sort of have some vague idea of what heartburn is, that doesn't seem like a terrible solution.

Sydnee:

No, that's actually a good idea.

Justin:

For what they had available to them, not bad.

Sydnee:

Yeah, that's actually a really clever solution that, uh, as we, when we get to the end and I talk about like what we do with heartburn now, that's one of the suggestions we give now.

Justin:

Mm.

Sydnee:

So, that's pretty good.

Justin:

I actually, mine is, in a fun new twist, when I have my morning heartburn, uh, it is actually, like, severely irritated by the yoga that I do, 'cause I end up, like, pointing at, like, "This way to the place that hurts! Come on, stomach acid, you're with me." Um, so that's a lesson—

Sydnee:

So, you're hanging upside down a lot?

Justin:

Yeah, a lot of stunts like that.

Sydnee:

I see—

Justin:

A lot of cool stunts.

Sydnee:

I don't ever get to see you do yoga, it's hard for me to imagine that you are coordinated enough to do upside down stunts.

Justin:

Oh, no fully, no fully. I'm like Michael Keaton in Batman, like, hanging from the ceiling with, uh, those special foot boots.

Sydnee:

[laughing] Will you start doing that in Charlie's room so I can watch you on the Nest cam while I'm at work?

Justin:

No, it's not about, uh, looking good. It's about feeling good. **Sydnee:**

[laughing] **Justin:**

I do both, but it's mainly about the second one.

Sydnee:

I should take a quick step back and just mention, uh, I took for granted that most everybody knows what heartburn is. But just to clarify, the term heartburn really just refers to that burning, uh, pain that a lot of people will feel in their chest usually related to acid reflux. Now, heartburn doesn't have to mean acid reflux disease, which is a whole other thing. But, for the purposes of this show, we're generally going to use it to refer to that 'cause that, that's ... Most of the time if you have heartburn, it is because stomach acid, which belongs in your stomach, hence the name.

Justin:

Hence the name.

Sydnee:

Stomach acid, uh, has come through the lower esophageal sphincter up into the esophagus.

Justin:

[laughing] Nice.

Sydnee:

Yes, I said sphincter. [laughing]

Justin:

Nice.

Sydnee:

Yeah, so the bottom of your esophagus should be kind of a one way door. Stuff goes down your esophagus, it opens up, it goes into your stomach and then stays there. Uh, for a lot of different reasons, for a lot of people that muscle is loose and so then acid can come back up, uh, irritate the esophagus and you get pain and that is called heartburn. Now, there are other things, like, spasms and such that can cause what we would term heartburn 'cause it's a symptom.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

Uh, but, generally, the two, you can use the two together even though a gastro-neurologist would be very quick to tell you that it's not the exact same thing.

Justin:

Um, I don't even really think of it as heartburn anymore. I just think of like 10 AM to 2 PM as, like, the afternoon calm. Like, I typify time by the time I don't have heartburn.

Sydnee:

The absence of heartburn.

Justin:

Yes, the absence of heartburn.

Sydnee:

What do you, do you have a name for that special time that you don't...

Justin:

[crosstalk] The afternoon calm.

Sydnee:

That's it?

Justin:

I just... Yes, that is it.

Sydnee:

That's not very catchy.

Justin:

No, it—

Sydnee:

I just expected you to have a better name for it.

Justin:

I don't, uh, I keep hoping that my life will be turned around by some mysterious force. And I guess I could be— I don't... Here's the embarrassing confession. Like. I don't take Famotidine as much as I should, but like, for some reason, I worry that I'm like, um, stamping down a problem. Like, you know, like, putting lipstick on a pig. You know what I mean? Like I've got some sort of problem that I need to fix and it's called... Like it shouldn't be happening to me.

Sydnee:

Right.

Justin:

So, I just get in the habit of like taking it every day and it seems like not, like, a solution, a good long term solution.

Sydnee:

Well, and it would be fair to say it's not. Uh, you know, there are lifestyle modifications that would probably be better for you and me. And you know who knew that too, were the Greeks.

Justin:

Oh, yeah?

Sydnee:

Who recommended, uh, for most things, the Greeks were really in to dietary treatments for most things.

Justin:

Mm-hmm. And exercise, they loved that.

Sydnee:

Yes. So, which, I mean, those are good ideas. Uh, it's hard to say they were wrong per se. Uh, but diet was one of the main things that they would recommend if people had symptoms of heartburn. Uh, usually something that consisted of, like, gruel and honey and water and vinegar. Just mix all that together and exercise, uh, in moderation and have less sex.

Justin:

All right.

Sydnee:

I don't... I don't know, I mean, I guess if, like, you just ate, like, a pizza and then you had sex and then, you know, you'd get, that would cause some acid reflux.

Justin:

Yeah, like sex right after...

Sydnee:

Maybe.

Justin:

The sex that everybody loves, the kind you have right after a pizza.

Sydnee:

[laughing] And upside down.

Justin:

And upside down.

Sydnee:

And, and if you're prone to acid reflux, that could be, that could be acid reflux and heartburn inducing.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Um, Hippocrates specifically advised against, uh, eating cheese after a meal, which seems like a weird thing. Like is that a thing that people do? Like, "I've just had a big meal, time for my piece of cheese."

Justin:

Well, no. But, I mean, like, there's such a thing as a cheese plate.

Sydnee:

But doesn't the wine and cheese course come before? Or is that after a meal?

Justin:

I try to avoid meals where a wine and cheese course will be like part of the thing.

Sydnee:

We're not fancy enough to know. I have, like, a beer and popcorn course, which is, like, what I eat late at night when I'm still hungry.

Justin:

The secret, yeah, I have a—

Sydnee:

My secret beer and popcorn.

Justin:

I have a cereal course at about 11:30 every night.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm, this is absolutely true. This is part of the reason Justin has heartburn, is that your evening—

Justin:

Oh my gosh, Sydnee! Are you saying my bad food choices may connect to my every day heartburn?

Sydnee:

I just wanna share this. Every night, we go through the same bedtime routine. I go to, like, brush my teeth, take my contacts out, pee, uh, wash my face, get ready for bed.

Justin:

I feel like you've really covered this before, like you really—

Sydnee:

Have I? Have I told, have I shared everybody with this?

Justin:

Yeah, I'm pretty sure you like—

Sydnee:

And then I come in the bedroom and every night I find Justin stretched out on the bed, crunch, crunch, crunch, crunching a bowl of cereal in bed.

Justin:

I guess it's a good point, though, 'cause some people may not have missed— They might have missed the episode where you talked about my secret cereal.

Sydnee:

His secret cereal at night.

Justin:

Addiction, uh...

Sydnee:

I just wanna make sure everybody knows.

Justin:

Hey, hey, Dr. Smart Butt, you got anymore trivia you wanna share about old dudes, not me?

Sydnee:

How about we talk about Pliny?

Justin:

Oh, excellent, I knew that fool would be popping up.

Sydnee:

Uh, Pliny, uh, had a treatment, Pliny the Elder, one of our favorite, um— One of the big fans of the show I would like to say. [laughing]

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Sure. Uh, he had a treatment for heartburn, as he did for everything. And, uh, his recommendation was to take coral and crush it up into a powder and ingest the powdered coral.

Justin:

Okay. There's something about that on, like, a deep level that sounds not bad. Like that sounds so— The idea of eating coral sounds soothing to me for heartburn.

Sydnee:

Uh, that is a strange statement. On one hand, you're right in that, uh, coral does contain calcium carbonate, which would be useful for heartburn.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Uh, so he was actually on to something here. I would say on the flip side, um, isn't coral one of those things you're not supposed to go mess with? Like aren't— Like isn't—

Justin:

Are you kidding? Back in Pliny's day? Are you kidding me?

Sydnee:

Well, like, you're not supposed to, like, swim down and break off pieces of coral, Like you're supposed to like leave it alone.

Justin:

You think they gave a solitary crap? They were living to 26 years old. They'll break off whatever they wanted to.

Sydnee:

That's— I'm just saying, like, as a solution now, I don't want anybody disrupting any reefs so that they can fix their heartburn.

Justin:

Are you telling me that you envision some people might be like, "Well, heartburn again. I might go to Rite Aid and get some Tums. Or I might put on my scuba gear and go hit the reef."

Sydnee:

Go visit the Great Barrier Reef. [laughing]

Justin:

Go crush some coral.

Sydnee:

I don't know. I just don't want anybody to disrupt any ecosystems.

Justin:

Yeah, definitely not for heartburn.

Sydnee:

Uh, it was actually Galen who came up with the term, uh, heartburn. Cardialgia is what it was called, which heart pain, heart burn. Um, and he also had a remedy for it, uh, but this was not unique, this remedy that he came up with was... Galen wrote an entire book about it. It was his remedy for most things, it was called theriac. Uh, this was actually, we talked about on a previous show, something called mithridate.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

Do you remember that?

Justin:

Yep.

Sydnee:

Which was sort of like this cure all that was made of all kinds of stuff, it was, like, uh, it had like, a semi mystical quality to it and—

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

This was actually kind of a derivative of that.

Justin:

Uh, by the way, mithridate is totally a thing in, uh, Final Fantasy and, uh Dragon's Dogma. You asked if it was in video games and it is fully, fully in video games.

Sydnee:

And I would, I would posit that this may be as well.

Justin:

Oh, okay.

Sydnee:

Theriac. And in other ones, I don't know, maybe.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

It just—It has that same kind of—

Justin:

Can you spell it for me?

Sydnee:

Uh, T-H-E-R-I-A-C.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

So, it was— Similarly, it was a cure all. It was made of many different ingredients, usually, uh, some of them had to be kind of hard to obtain and may be cumbersome to prepare, like, you had to cook things or heat things or dry things or, you know, mash things up, uh, for a long period of time.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Uh, it usually had about 64 ingredients but, of course, like anything, you know, any ancient recipes like this, it could vary.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

Um, because of how long it would take to prepare and how much time would go into it, 'cause it would take, like, months, it was usually something that was only available to rich people or royalty.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Or somebody who could afford something like this.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Um, it almost always contained opium or myrrh or hemp, something like that. And then, uh, the big thing that differentiated it from mithridate is that it usually contained, like, viper flesh.

Justin:

Whoa.

Sydnee:

This one, it actually could contain different kinds of animal meat, which is a little weird. And then honey and some fermented herbs and various oils and fruits and roots and barks and minerals. The most famous of these, you can find a recipe for it online, uh, was a Venetian form of this that was actually also called Venus treacle.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Uh, but this was Galen's remedy for heartburn and, I mean, and everything. Like, this is what he would've prescribed you whether you came in with, you know, tuberculosis or leprosy or a sinus infection or heartburn or you were bleeding, it wouldn't matter.

Justin:

So, how much would some Venetian theriac, what's that gonna run me today you think?

Sydnee:

I'm assuming it would be pretty expensive. I don't have a—

Justin:

It's on— Because I'm looking at a page on Amazon where you can fully buy wild crafted...

Sydnee:

Oh, how much is it?

Justin:

...Venetian theriac. Uh, it is \$50.

Sydnee:

For how much?

Justin:

A pound.

Sydnee:

A pound?

Justin:

A pound.

Sydnee:

Is it, like, a solid? 'Cause I got the impression that it was kind of like a solid.

Justin:

They're— I think they're— They just probably mixed up a bunch of crap and called it Venetian theriac. I'm not really sure, but it's \$50 on Amazon. I don't normally Google during the show, but I checked to see if that was in video games and the first response is you can just buy some theriac on Amazon, if you want that.

Sydnee:

I wouldn't.

Justin:

Yeah, it's probably not gonna help you very much.

Sydnee:

Because the thing to remember about it is that it was in fact a cure all.

Justin:

Uh-oh.

Sydnee:

And what do we know about cure alls?

Justin:

Mostly they cure nothing.

Sydnee:

That's right.

Justin:

Them's the breaks.

Sydnee:

Uh, throughout the years there have been a lot of natural kind of treatments for, um, heartburn that people have tried and that you'll still find popular on the internet today if you start looking for, like, "home cures for my heartburn".

Justin:

People are really drawn to, like, you see a lot of home cures bubble up around things that are more annoyances than they are actual impediments through your day to day life.

Sydnee:

So, that way you can avoid going to the doctor, right?

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

'Cause we're all just trying to steal your money.

Justin:

You gave me a home cure for, uh, like, gas pain once that, like, destroyed it.

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm.

Justin:

It was awesome. It had like ginger—

Sydnee:

It had ginger in it. It was pretty good for an upset stomach.

Justin:

And lemon in it, it was awesome. Yeah.

Sydnee:

Similar kinds of things are often recommended for heartburn. Um, drinking a lot of water, I don't know that that would help. Although, if you're drinking water instead of heartburn-causing things that's probably good. Lemon has been recommended for heartburn. Oh, I'd be careful with that because, uh, a lot of citrus things give me heartburn.

Justin:

Uh-oh.

Sydnee:

Cloves, um, almonds, something called angelica, which I, my favorite part about this—

Justin:

From Rugrats.

Sydnee:

Yes, Angelica from Rugrats is great for heartburn. And it was mentioned— [laughing] That little rascal. It was mentioned that, uh, it was also really good for farts so... [laughing] So, I guess if you have that problem—

Justin:

[laughing] We just don't say farts enough on this show. It's a medical show, we've got license to do it, we just don't do it.

Sydnee:

[laughing] That's a very— I like— What I like about it, is because it's such, like, a dainty name.

Justin:

Not saying farts?

Sydnee:

No, it's a dainty name that you're taking for your, like, heartburn and farts. Like, "I'm gonna take some angelica. Honey, honey, did you get any ... When you were at the store earlier, did you pick up any angelica for me?"

Justin:

"Um, bad news, honey. I got fart burn. I— That means I have farts and heartburn, but I'm busy, I'm too busy being in pain, so I call it fart burn."

Sydnee:

[laughing] "Could you run to the store and get me some angelica, please?"

Justin:

[laughing] Remember that, it was Parks and Rec where he was so upset the doctor didn't say that Jerry had a fart attack? Anyway, that's—

Sydnee:

Uh, you could try lettuce... Again, I don't, I don't know that that would work. Um, cardamom, gentian violet has been recommended, apples and then I saw apple cider vinegar a lot. I'll tell ya, we probably should do a whole

show on that at some point just because apple cider vinegar is recommended for, like, everything.

Justin:

They love it, huh?

Sydnee:

Um, but heartburn often, uh, these are all, I mean, I guess at least if you wanna try these things you may have them in your pantry. Uh, I think we could all do with eating a little more lettuce, especially in this household, so I'm certainly not gonna discourage you from eating lettuce.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Um, similarly, in the late 1800s, one particular cure that was popular was the sippy diet.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Um, which sounds like, a lot of people assumed it was named for what you do, which is, like, it's a bland liquid diet that you would be on.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

So, they thought that's why it was called that, because it was, like, something you would kind of sip at. But it was actually the guy's name, Bertram Sippy. [laughing]

Justin:

Awe, that's a cute name.

Sydnee:

He was a doctor from, uh, Wisconsin and he recommended that you just, uh— Like I said, it was a very bland diet, it was mainly liquid. And then every hour you would have some milk and antacids, which probably was the most helpful part is, was the antacids.

Justin:

I just can't imagine. I hate— I have heartburn, like, constantly and I can't imagine ever getting that extreme about it. Like I could find ... If I can come up with a convenient way to rid myself of it, maybe. But any other, uh...

Sydnee:

Well, I mean, can you imagine though every hour taking in, like, a bunch of milk and cream and antacids? Every hour.

Justin:

It's wild. I— No, I think that would make me very nauseous.

Sydnee:

And also milk is, uh, one of those double edged swords. Like it feels good going down, but it's actually not doing you any good in the long run.

Justin:

See, okay. But it's a base, right?

Sydnee:

Yeah, but it's the calcium, stimulates acid production.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Yeah, you got to be careful with that.

Justin:

But, but calcium carbonate is what's in Tums.

Sydnee:

Yeah, it stimulates acid production, I know.

Justin:

Are you kidding me?

Sydnee:

Brilliant. Brilliant product.

Justin:

Are you kidding me?

Sydnee:

Works when you take it, makes you need more later.

Justin:

Oh, my god.

Sydnee:

I know.

Justin:

Sometimes you just change my whole life.

Sydnee:

Cracked it wide open. That's why milk feels good, but it's not fixing it. Uh, there was also something called Fowler's solution that was made by a Dr. Thomas Fowler. And it was used for, again, a lot of—

Justin:

How did you just move on from this Earth shattering news about Tums?

Sydnee:

Are you still stuck on Tums?

Justin:

I feel like I'm a deed of the Crying Game, I'm losing my marbles over here.

Sydnee:

I don't wanna get sued by Tums. I mean, it will relieve the pain you're feeling from your heartburn transiently.

Justin:

Ugh.

Sydnee:

I, that's why it's not good, uh, if you're— And I'll say this at the end again. But if you're having to take Tums all the time, you should probably go talk to your doctor about it. Um, but Fowler's solution, again another cure all, was really just a solution of potassium arsenite, so arsenic.

Justin:

Oh, okay.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

Not good.

Sydnee:

No. There was a time period, again, where arsenic was a very popular medicine for everything.

Justin:

Mm-hmm. Uh, any, like, more off the beaten path stuff? I want like that deep, deep, weird natural stuff.

Sydnee:

I'm gonna take you to the deep, weird natural stuff. But first, why don't you follow me to the billing department?

Justin:

Let's go!

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

Justin:

So, what you got for me? You got some of that homeopathic stuff? What do you got?

Sydnee:

I do. I've got some homeopathic cures.

Justin:

Ah, choice.

Sydnee:

For heartburn for you. Um—

Justin:

[whispering] That's a synonym for fake.

Sydnee:

Yes, it is. That is a synonym for fake.

Justin:

Shh, don't tell anybody.

Sydnee:

So, if you remember from when we talked about homeopathy or just because, you know. Uh, homeopathic cures are always something that is— It's really just a drop of something that is actually a substance, like, some sort of supposedly active meta medicinal substance in a bunch of water.

Justin:

Mm-hmm, yeah.

Sydnee:

So, it's really just water.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

With the essence of something.

Justin:

Got it.

Sydnee:

Right. And it's usually something that sounds poisonous or toxic or something like that, um, because the idea that, like, if you're having a symptom, you know, vomiting, that if I give you something that would induce vomiting, only I give you just a drop of it in a big bottle of water, then it'll— It's a like—

Justin:

[laughing] And nothing will happen and we'll all move on with our lives and pretend we didn't waste \$20.

Sydnee:

[laughing] So, because of this, one treatment is nux-vomica, which is, again, a very popular homeopathic remedy for a lot of different things. It's from, uh, the tree where we get strychnine, so it's related to strychnine.

Justin:

Cool. Cool tree. Thanks, Giving Tree.

Sydnee:

What I like is that— So, I was reading on one homeopathic website where it— There are a lot of different cures for homeopathy, or a lot of different cures for heartburn, um, and how you decide which one to use is partially based on the person's personality.

Justin:

Mm, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Sydnee:

So, it's not just the symptoms or the medical problem.

Justin:

Sounds good and real.

Sydnee:

So, for instance, uh, they said if you have somebody with heartburn and you are thinking about using nux-vomica, um, this may be a person who has a brusque temperament, uh, they're overworked, it's a high powered businessman who's very intense.

They may be bossy, easy to anger, um, they often eat and drink alcohol in excess, they desire coffee and spicy foods and fatty foods and stimulants. It's somebody who's inclined to overdo everything.

Justin:

So, Mr. Big from Sex and the City, uh—

Sydnee:

I was thinking like Don Draper personally, but—

Justin:

Okay. Well, who I was thinking was, uh, Mr. Big from Sex and the City.

Sydnee:

Uh-huh, okay. Go for it, uh-huh.

Justin:

Yeah. If he has heartburn.

Sydnee:

Right.

Justin:

He closes up the big book of ideas and he says, "That's all the business I have time for today. I have heartburn." Uh, this is— Then, he's gonna reach for a drop nux-vomica in a glass of water.

Sydnee:

He says, "Listen, I'm bossy and easy to anger, I'm a high powered businessman. I do everything in excess. Could I have some nux-vomica?"
[laughing]

Justin:

Can I have some nux-vomica?

Sydnee:

Now, let's say that instead you have somebody who is, um, maybe a little more dependent, maybe somebody who's, um, the subject of pity, they are afraid of being alone, they desire a lot of sympathy from other people, this is, and they may be somebody who really likes ice cream and pastries. This would be somebody that you'd wanna use pulsatilla for.

Justin:

So—

Sydnee:

Um, especially, by the way, if they come to you and say, "I have the feeling of a hole being burned in my stomach and it's accompanied by flatulence." We're back to flatulence again! Then you wanna use this highly toxic crocus called pulsatilla.

Justin:

So, if, uh, Steve from Sex and the City gets heartburn while he's caring for his beautiful, terrifying son, Brady.

Sydnee:

[laughing] I didn't know you knew this much about Sex and the City.

Justin:

I, honestly, I've just been listening to The Worst Idea of All Time a lot. They're watching Sex and the City 2 every week for a year.

Sydnee:

Oh, okay, okay.

Justin:

So, like, Sex and the City 2 is, like, very big in my life.

Sydnee:

Gotcha.

Justin:

It's probably my number one movie that I've never seen. [laughing]

Sydnee:

I've never seen it either so I can't—

Justin:

But you want to! This is where our paths diverge, my dear.

Sydnee:

Well, I've seen the first one a couple of times.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

So, anyway. [crosstalk] Yeah, I think that's a fair comparison.

Justin:

[crosstalk] I can recap it for you in terrifying detail, should you desire that.

Sydnee:

Let's save our listeners from that.

Justin:

Okay, fair enough. Just go listen to Worst Idea of All Time and they'll take care of it for you. [laughing]

Sydnee:

So, if you want homeopathic cures for heartburn, I don't know why, there are lots of them, and you really should probably have, like, a personality test done first to determine which one would work for you specifically. Or just

drink some water 'cause that's essentially what it is. It's a bottle of water with something in it, with, like, a drop of something in it. Um...

Justin:

Fake!

Sydnee:

Now, have you ever heard of, in pregnant— I mean, obviously we know, I already mentioned that in pregnancy you're more prone to getting heartburn.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Uh, the hormones, uh, that you have increased levels of are, uh, they can easily make that lower esophageal sphincter that we talked about a little, uh, more relaxed.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

And so it allows for acid to come up. Plus, like, the pressure of the baby itself as your stomach gets bigger and it kind of pushes everything up—

Justin:

Yes, I remember it being a serious issue around our house.

Sydnee:

It was a horrible issue for me. It was bad enough— And then, do you remember when we were in New York and I had that kimchi?

Justin:

Yeah, I'll never forget.

Sydnee:

I won't either. Seriously, that kimchi destroyed me for weeks. I mean for weeks.

Justin:

We went to this place called, uh, what, what was it? Uh, Pocha 32? Is that the name?

Sydnee:

Something like that. It was delicious food, I had an amazing—

Justin:

[crosstalk] It's Pocha, yeah, Pocha 32.

Sydnee:

[crosstalk] Yeah. We had an amazing time.

Justin:

[crosstalk] It's this, a Korean place in Korea town, it is, like, it's fantastic, it's outstanding. It's in New York. It's fantastic, it's outstanding, you should absolutely go there. They do this big watermelon soju, which is, like, a watermelon, cold watermelon liquor that they serve in half a watermelon. It's the best.

Sydnee:

Yeah, it looked delicious.

Justin:

It looked delicious... Oh, ooh I forgot.

Sydnee:

'Cause I was quite pregnant, yeah.

Justin:

Yeah, I forgot.

Sydnee:

Yeah, it looked great. Uh, the kimchi was delicious, I paid for it for weeks. Um...

Justin:

Yeah. Well, okay. Weeks? You're a medical doctor.

Sydnee:

No, seriously weeks. No, I mean, really, I— It messed me up proper. Anyway, uh, you may have heard the myth that if you have a lot of heartburn in pregnancy then that means your baby has a lot of hair. Have you heard that?

Justin:

Yeah, yeah.

Sydnee:

Do you know that they did a study and they actually found that there is a correlation?

Justin:

What?

Sydnee:

That there is a correlation and, I mean, it was a small study and it was just once so who knows? But it was interesting because that's always something they've told you like, "Ah, you got a lot of heartburn, your baby's got a lot of hair."

And what they think it is related to, it's not the hair causing heartburn, that's craziness. Uh, that's not where the baby— The baby is nowhere close to your esophagus. Uh, but maybe the same hormones that lead to that relaxed esophagus can also make your baby hairier.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

So, maybe there is a correlation. Who knows? Just an interesting thing.

Justin:

[crosstalk] That is wild. That is wild.

Sydnee:

Uh, we did have a hairy baby, I will say.

Justin:

She was hairy, yeah, it's true.

Sydnee:

She was hairy. She's a hairy baby.

Justin:

Not a hairy human now, she's, like, fine.

Sydnee:

No, well, she was— I mean, she had a lot of hair, like long hair.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

When she was born.

Justin:

Yeah, okay, yeah. You don't mean like lycanthrope levels?

Sydnee:

No. No, I mean like she was, like, a human baby.

Justin:

Sydnee, I love our human baby, but all I can think about is my heartburn. What can I actually do that will actually fix it?

Sydnee:

Okay. So, some actual heartburn info for you. Um, again, probably if you have that heartburn it's the result of acid reflux.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

So, that acid coming back up into your esophagus. Although, there are other things that can cause it. So, it is okay to try lifestyle modifications and over the counter medicines. But if this persists, please see your doctor. Don't just assume it's nothing. Don't just assume it's anything I've said. Go see your doctor and talk to him about it.

So, um, some things to do, first of all, would be to find your trigger foods. It's usually a spicy food. For me, anything citrusy, I can no longer drink any, uh, mixed drinks with sour mix in them. Unfortunately, I can't drink orange juice.

Justin:

[crosstalk] Ugh, that's the worst.

Sydnee:

Uh, alcohol is a common trigger as well, carbonated things, peppermint, fatty fried foods, chocolate, onions, tomato is really bad for me, um, large fatty meals. Those are all common triggers.

Identify those and try to avoid them as much as possible. Or, if you eat them, just know what's coming. Um, it is worse in overweight people and it's worse in people in pregnancy, typically. So, uh, you should also, as we mentioned before, is even they knew thousands of years ago, elevate the head of your bed can help. It's a gravity thing.

Justin:

Hmm.

Sydnee:

Keeps the acid down where it belongs.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Um, you should leave about two hours between the last thing you eat and when you go to bed. You don't wanna lay down flat right after you eat. So, you should try to avoid eating something and then going horizontal immediately.

Justin:

Because the stomach acids are doing their thing right then.

Sydnee:

Right. 'Cause you're releasing more stomach acid 'cause you're digesting the food. So, if you can try to stay upright for at least two hours after you eat a meal, that should help too.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

So, try not to eat really late in the evening. Um, again, don't lay down after, don't smoke, smoking contributes to it. So, like, again, that scenario where we talked about where you have a big giant pizza and then have sex, certainly don't do that and then have a cigarette.

Justin:

Got it.

Sydnee:

So, all of those movie scenes, like, you can just imagine those beautiful—

Justin:

All those classic films where people had pizza and then some sex.

Sydnee:

[laughing] And then a cigarette. You can just imagine the heartburn they were having. Um, there are medications available over the counter. Justin and I keep mentioning the one we take. [laughing] Um, and...

Justin:

Which is not a plug, it's just really cheap and you can get a lot of 'em for cheap. [laughing]

Sydnee:

And we're using generic names, so it's cool. But, uh—

Justin:

By the way, please buy generic, uh, heartburn medication.

Sydnee:

[crosstalk] Yeah, that's fine. That's fine. They're much cheaper and there's no reason to think they wouldn't help.

Justin:

[crosstalk] Do you know the only name brand medication that I buy is Advil 'cause I really like the candy coating on Advil. It's just not the same with the off brand versions.

Sydnee:

And that will not work for heartburn. Please don't take it for heartburn.

Justin:

Okay. I wasn't suggesting that, but thank you.

Sydnee:

Well, I just didn't wanna confuse people. [laughing]

Justin:

Okay. I also like NyQuil. Like what are you talking about?

Sydnee:

Um, there are a lot of over the counter medications, antacids that you can take. We've mentioned. Like Tums and Rolaids, things like that. Um, there are Famotidine and Ranitidine, things, like, they're called H2 blockers, they're a certain kind of histamine blocker that will reduce the amount of acid that is produced. And then there's the proton pump inhibitors, or PPIs. You've probably heard about them on the news.

Justin:

[crosstalk] I don't want my proton pump inhibited, I'm trying to blast ghosts over here.

Sydnee:

[laughing] Not that. Not your proton pack.

Justin:

Oh, okay.

Sydnee:

No, it's, um, it blocks the release of acid in your stomach. And, um, you—I'm sure you've heard of them, they're medicines like Nexium.

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

Prilosec, Prevacid, all of those kinds of medicines. And you may have seen them in the news recently because they have been correlated with things like dementia and kidney disease. Have you heard about this?

Justin:

Mm-hmm.

Sydnee:

I've had a lot of people ask me about this.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Uh, there is some data that is interesting about that. What I would say is this. If you are having to take these medications all the time, just talk to your doctor about it. It may be that you just need to work on your lifestyle and change some things so that you don't have so much heartburn.

But please go talk to your doctor about it 'cause it's never a good idea to just be taking medications unsupervised for years and years on end. So, if you're having a lot of heartburn, it doesn't hurt to ask. They may tell you to give up some of your favorite habits and foods and what not.

Justin:

Yeah, 'cause like— I know that myself, and this is something I'm working on and trying to get better. But I know a lot of times I use those medications because like it's just, uh, as a way to continue eating like an idiot and not expecting there to be repercussions.

Sydnee:

Well, and they will—

Justin:

Which, of course, there will be, always will be.

Sydnee:

They will facilitate that. Uh, that's the unfortunate thing, is that it may be that you really do need to kind of reexamine your lifestyle and make some healthier choices for yourself. Look at is something really worth it or not. Um, especially if maybe some of these medicines we are gonna find have some long term consequences. So if you're finding you need them all the time, please go talk to your doctor about it.

Justin:

Excellent. Um, thank you so much to all of our sponsors. Uh, thank you to, uh, trunkclub.com/sawbones and zippergreeter.com/sawbones. Uh, thank you to the Maximum Fun network for having us on as part of their, uh, extended family. I wanna say congratulations to our buddy, Lin-Manuel Miranda for, uh, his Grammy win and performance. Super duper exciting.

Sydnee:

It was amazing, congratulations.

Justin:

[crosstalk] It was wonderful. Congratulations, Lin. And, um, thanks to The Taxpayers for letting us use their song Medicines as the intro and outro of our program. Um, go listen to Still Buffering, it's a new show she does with her sister. Uh, they're—

Sydnee:

Thank you, Justin.

Justin:

Even if you don't listen, go join their Facebook group 'cause it's amazing right now.

Sydnee:

It really is. There's so many cool prom pictures on there right now.

Justin:

Oh, right now it's, like, prom pictures galore, it's the best. Uh, but it's a show about being a teen so it's great. Um, I think that's gonna do it for us. Syd, you got anything else?

Sydnee:

No, that's all I have.

Justin:

Excellent. Well, listen folks, thank you so much. Sorry we were a little bit late this week, but, uh, we'll try to not make a habit of it. But, uh, so in that sense of eternal optimism I will say, until next Wednesday, when we have something else to talk about. My name is Justin McElroy.

Sydnee:

I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Justin:

And, as always, don't drill a hole in your head.

[theme music plays]

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