



# Reducing Your Proton Pump Inhibitor Use

UHN

## Information for patients who take a proton pump inhibitor to treat heartburn (acid reflux)

Read this handout to learn:

- What a proton pump inhibitor is
- Why you need to use less
- How to safely decrease the amount you take
- How to prevent heartburn
- What to do if you still feel heartburn

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### What is a proton pump inhibitor?

Proton pump inhibitors are a type of medicine. These medicines stop your stomach from making more acid. It is used to treat many problems in the digestive system. This includes acid reflux, also called heartburn.

These medicines come in many names. Some examples are:

- Dexilant® (dexlansoprazole)
- Nexium® (esomeprazole)
- Prevacid® (lansoprazole)
- Losec® (omeprazole)
- Pantoloc® (pantoprazole)
- Tecta® (pantoprazole Mg)
- Pariet® (rabeprazole)

It is important that you only take the lowest dose of this medicine you need.

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Created: 05/2013  
Form: D-5944

## **Why should I stop or lower the dose of this medicine?**

In the past, people took proton pump inhibitors for many years.

But, research has shown that long term use of these medicines may not be healthy. It can make it easier for you to get these health problems:

- infections
- weak bones (these can lead to broken bones)
- trouble absorbing nutrients from your food (such as magnesium)

## **What do I need to do?**

### **1. Learn how to prevent heartburn.**

You will need to make some changes to your lifestyle.

### **2. Decrease the amount of proton pump inhibitor you take.**

Your doctor will give you lower doses of medicine.

**Read the instructions on the next page to learn more.**

Talk to your doctor if you have any questions.

## **What lifestyle changes can I make to prevent heartburn?**

✓ Avoid having the foods listed below. These foods can cause acid reflux.

- Chocolate
- Coffee
- Onions
- Citrus fruit
- Alcoholic drinks
- Chili peppers
- Tomatoes
- Garlic
- Mint

- ✓ Keep a healthy weight.
- ✓ Stop or decrease smoking.
- ✓ Sit up for 2 to 3 hours after you eat. Do not lie down.
- ✓ Do not wear tight clothes.
- ✓ Raise your head with pillows when lying down.

## How do I decrease the amount of medicine I take?

Your doctor will tell you if you are taking a higher dose or a standard dose of proton pump inhibitor.

### Step 1: If you are taking a higher dose of proton pump inhibitor

Your doctor will reduce you to the standard dose. Your new dose is \_\_\_\_\_ once a day. Do this for 1 week then start step 2.

This medicine works best if you take it 30 to 60 minutes before your first meal of the day.

### Step 2: If you are taking a standard dose of proton pump inhibitor

Your doctor will reduce your dose in half. Your new dose is \_\_\_\_\_ once a day. Do this for 2 weeks.

This medicine works best if you take it 30 to 60 minutes before your first meal of the day.

Some people will get heartburn for a short time. This will normally stop within 1 to 2 weeks. Read page 4 to learn about what you can do when you get heartburn.

### Step 3: If you are feeling well on a low dose of proton pump inhibitor

Stop taking your proton pump inhibitor. If you need to take antacids or acid blockers, try to take the lowest amount you need to control the heartburn.

Go see your doctor right away if you have severe heartburn at any time.

## What should I do if I still feel heart burn?

1. **Take an antacid.** Some examples are Tums®, Maalox®, or Gaviscon®. These will give you quick relief. Take these when you feel heartburn. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if antacids are safe for you. Some medicines like levothyroxine, iron and some antibiotics should not be taken with antacids.

How much to take:

Aluminum hydroxide/ Magnesium trisilicate (Gaviscon Regular Tablet®)	Chew 2 to 4 tablets.
Calcium carbonate (Maalox Regular®)	Chew 2 to 3 tablets.
Calcium carbonate (Tums Regular®)	Chew 2 to 4 tablets.

2. **Take an acid blocker.** Some examples are ranitidine (Zantac®) or famotidine (Pepcid®). Acid blockers work best if you take them 30 minutes or 1 hour before you think you will get heartburn, for example before you have a large or spicy meal.

You can take these when you feel heartburn but an antacid will work faster. You can get them over the counter or by prescription.

How much to take:

Famotidine (Pepcid®)	Take 10mg to 20mg. Do not take more than 2 times a day.
Ranitidine (Zantac®)	Take 75mg to 150mg. Do not take more than 2 times a day.

It is safe to take both the antacid and the acid blocker at the same time.