

See your doctor if your symptoms do not improve after 2 to 4 weeks or if you develop any of the following: vomiting or coughing up blood, difficult or painful swallowing, chest pain, unexplained weight loss or dark bowel movements.

How Can I Improve My Symptoms?

- ◆ Try to keep to a healthy weight.
- ◆ Don't smoke.
- ◆ Eat at regular times and in moderation. Avoid large meals and don't eat too late at night.
- ◆ Avoid fatty and spicy foods and acidic drinks such as cola and fresh orange juice.

DIET
EXERCISE
REDUCE STRESS
LIFESTYLE
STOP SMOKING



- ◆ Cut back on caffeine and alcohol.
- ◆ Don't bend over or lie flat immediately after eating.
- ◆ Check that any medicines you buy are not making your symptoms worse, such as anti-inflammatory painkillers (ask your pharmacist or doctor which ones are safe).
- ◆ Avoid wearing tight belts and clothing.
- ◆ Raise the head of your bed by 10-15cm (4-6 inches) using blocks under the legs of the bed, or use a wedge shaped pillow to raise your head.
- ◆ Include some physical activity and relaxation in your daily routine to help reduce stress.

If you need help or advice to stop smoking or to cut back on alcohol—please ask your pharmacist, nurse or doctor.

Remember: Medication can help to reduce the symptoms of heartburn and indigestion but changes to your lifestyle can also make a big difference.

**NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group
Medicines Management Team**
First Floor, Runcorn Town Hall, Heath Road,
Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 5TD

Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs)



Information and advice for adults stopping or “stepping down” treatment for indigestion and heartburn



What are Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs)?

PPIs reduce the amount of acid your stomach makes. The reduction in acid can help to relieve the symptoms of indigestion (dyspepsia) and heartburn (acid reflux).

Examples are:

- ◆ Omeprazole
- ◆ Lansoprazole
- ◆ Esomeprazole
- ◆ Rabeprazole
- ◆ Pantoprazole

How long should you take a PPI for?

PPIs are usually used only for a short period of time (4-8 weeks). Your doctor will tell you if you have a condition or take a medication that requires you to take a PPI long term.

Why stop or reduce the use of PPIs?

All medicines carry risks of side effects as well as benefits. But long term use of PPIs has been linked to the following:

- ◆ Increased risk of certain infections such as *Clostridium Difficile* (this can cause very severe diarrhoea) and pneumonia.
- ◆ Reducing the absorption of magnesium and vitamin B12, which the body needs to remain healthy.
- ◆ Reducing the absorption of calcium which can increase the risk of breaking bones.

Therefore, it is advised that PPIs are used for the shortest period of time at the lowest effective dose.

How to stop or “step down” a PPI

Your doctor may “step down” PPI treatment to lower the risks to you by:

Reducing the dose - The dose of your PPI may be reduced to a lower dose.

Advising that you only take your PPI when needed - You may be asked to only take your PPI when you have indigestion or heartburn symptoms. When the symptoms are relieved (often after 2 to 3 days) you can stop taking the PPI.

Stopping your PPI– Your doctor may advise that you no longer need to take your PPI or offer a different treatment.

What should I do if my symptoms get worse?

When you “step down” or stop your PPI your symptoms may return; sometimes worse than before. These “rebound” symptoms are very common and usually go within 2 to 4 weeks of stopping the PPI.

During this time it can be helpful to ask your doctor or pharmacist for an antacid to relieve indigestion, or an alginate such as Peptac® or Gaviscon Advance® to relieve heartburn.

