

Plain Language Summary Template

Title:

Should I keep taking my proton pump inhibitor antacid pill for my acid reflux?

Name:

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Plain Language Summary:

Is my antacid a proton pump inhibitor?

Some examples of proton pump inhibitors are:

Prilosec (omeprazole), Prevacid (lansoprazole), and Nexium (esomeprazole)

What is acid reflux?

Acid reflux, or gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), is a condition in which the liquid and food in the stomach escape back up into the tube (esophagus) that connects the mouth and the stomach. The stomach makes acid to break down food so when this touches the esophagus it causes a burning in the chest. Some people call this heartburn. It is important to talk to your doctor and make sure your chest pain isn't caused by something more serious like a problem with your heart or lung.

What is a proton pump inhibitor?

A proton pump inhibitor is a type of antacid pill that shuts off the acid producing cells in the stomach so that reflux doesn't burn as much.

What are the benefits of taking a proton pump inhibitor for GERD?

Proton pump inhibitors can prevent heartburn and may help prevent esophageal cancer but doctors aren't sure about this.

What are the risks of taking a proton pump inhibitor for GERD?

Proton pump inhibitors can increase the risk of stomach bugs (including those that cause severe diarrhea), pneumonia, hip fractures, low vitamin B12, and low magnesium (a nutrient the body needs). They can also interact with other drugs you might be taking so it is important to tell your doctor if you are taking a proton pump inhibitor.

So should I keep taking my proton pump inhibitor?

Maybe. Right now doctors are still trying to figure out if longterm use of these medications is a good idea. One thing you can do is try to stop your proton pump inhibitor and see if you still have heartburn, because this can go away in some people. At first you may have more heartburn as your body gets used to being off the medication so you will need to give it some time. Not eating right before bed and eating smaller meals can make you feel better. Don't stop without talking to your doctor because she may have an important reason for having you take a proton pump inhibitor.

More information:

NIH information about GERD: <http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/gerd/>

AAFP information about the FDA warning about PPIs and fractures:

<http://www.aafp.org/online/en/home/publications/news/news-now/clinical-care-research/20100601ppi-fracture.html>

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