

Title: Treating Your Heartburn: The Proton Pump Inhibitor

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Abstract: Proton Pump Inhibitors are a commonly used medication for treatment of frequent heartburn. These are very effective and safe medications. There are some concerns about long-term safety, however. Cancer of the stomach is one of these concerns. While there is no strong evidence that PPIs can cause stomach cancer, there hasn't been enough research done to disprove a link between the two. The other long-term concerns coupled with high cost, make consideration of other antacid therapies more important.

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Are PPIs Safe?

There are some concerns about long-term safety of PPIs

Cancer: Recent studies have not shown any proven link between PPIs and stomach cancer. However, a very small link might still exist.

There are other concerns as well including infections, low iron levels, and low vitamin B12 levels. PPIs are also very expensive.

More won't be known about long-term safety until more studies are done. Thus far, PPIs appear to be very safe.

Other choices for treating heartburn exist including Zantac, Tums, and Gaviscon.

Examples of PPIs

- Nexium
- Prevacid
- Prilosec

For more information about heartburn and treatment go to:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/heartburn-gerd/ds00095>



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Treating Your Heartburn



The Proton Pump Inhibitor



A Brief Summary



What are the benefits of taking a PPI?

What is heartburn? What is a proton pump inhibitor?

Heartburn has nothing to do with the heart. It is an uncomfortable feeling in the chest that can be felt when stomach acid enters the tube between the stomach and the mouth. Acid should not be in this tube. Heartburn usually happens after eating.

You can avoid heartburn by avoiding foods that make it start for you and by avoiding laying down right after eating. Sometimes these steps are not enough and medication is needed.

One option is a Proton Pump Inhibitor (PPI). This is a medication that turns off the part of the stomach that makes acid. If there is less acid made, less can escape the stomach to cause heartburn. See back page for examples of this medication.

PPI medications are available for over-the-counter use as well. This is a medication that is used for treatment of *frequent* (2 or more times per week) heartburn.

- They are very effective: These are the most powerful antacid drugs available.
- They are easy to take: One pill per day relieves symptoms all day.
- Side effects are usually mild and include diarrhea and abdominal pain.