

Patient Information Leaflet

We have carried out a review of all patients on long term treatment with proton pump inhibitors (this includes omeprazole, esomeprazole, lansoprazole, pantoprazole, rabeprazole).

Our record shows that you have been taking a proton pump inhibitor (PPIs) mainly to help with the symptoms of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GORD) or gastritis.

Proton pump inhibitors, or PPIs, are medications that are used for treating stomach problems such as heartburn and ulcers. PPIs are helpful and well tolerated when used in the right way. However sometimes treatment goes on for longer than is needed. Evidence based research shows, where there is no clinical indication to continue with this medication for long term treatment of acid reflux symptoms or gastritis, the risks outweigh the benefit. The risks with continuing with the medication on a long-term basis include the following:

- Increase risk of gastro-intestinal infection (caused by *Clostridium difficile*)
- Increased risk of bone fractures
- Low magnesium, sodium & vitamin B12 levels
- May mask symptoms of gastric cancer

In addition, PPIs may cause or contribute to side effects such as headache, nausea, diarrhoea, rash, and interactions with other medications.

In the long-term, many patients can control symptoms of heart burn/ acid reflux with changes to their lifestyle and diet, such as avoiding dietary triggers, e.g., caffeine, chocolate, and fatty foods. If you smoke, consider smoking cessation, reduce, or stop alcohol intake. If you are overweight, consider losing weight, avoid meals 2 to 3 hours before bedtime and elevate the head of the bed. If you require further support with the lifestyle changes, please consider self-referring to Feel Good Suffolk: <https://feelgoodsuffolk.co.uk/> OR call 0345 603 4060.

I therefore suggest that you stop the long-term use of PPIs. However, if you have been on a PPI for a long time, your body is used to working with one. When you stop PPI, your body may over-react and produce more acid which may cause symptoms to return. Therefore, it would be recommended to take the medication every other day for 1 – 2 weeks then stop.

Your symptoms may return as your body gets used to working without a PPI. These should get better within a few days to weeks. If they develop, you can take over-the-counter antacid/ alginate such as: Gaviscon for fast relief of symptoms when needed, as they usually work in about 15 minutes.

If you have persistent indigestion symptoms or persistent vomiting or unexplained weight loss after stopping PPIs, please book an appointment to speak to one of our clinicians.

For more information, please use the following links:

[Heartburn and acid reflux - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

[Dietary & lifestyle advice for adults with gastro-oesophageal reflux disease \(GORD\) | CUH](#)

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Ahmadi