

HEARTBURN AND THE DANGERS OF HEARTBURN MEDICATIONS

Heartburn is a very common condition and affects nearly 60 million Americans at least once a month. It is actually estimated that more than 20 million Americans use proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) like Prilosec, Prevacid and Nexium to treat heartburn, acid reflux, GERD or peptic ulcer disease. These PPIs are among the most widely overprescribed and misused drugs today, with annual pharmaceutical sales near \$14 billion! These drugs were never intended to treat common heartburn as they were initially designed to treat conditions like bleeding ulcers, Zollinger-Ellison Syndrome (a rare condition that causes your stomach to produce excess acid) and severe acid reflux, where an endoscopy confirms that one's esophagus has been damaged. Acid reflux is not a disease where your stomach produces too much acid, it is actually an issue where the stomach acid comes back through the lower esophageal sphincter, as in cases of hiatal hernias. Heartburn is the primary symptom of acid reflux. This "heartburn" is most bothersome at night, after eating a large meal, bending over, lifting or lying down. In addition to heartburn, acid reflux can result in hoarseness, a feeling of food stuck in your throat, tightness in your throat, dental problems, bad breath and asthma.

Much research has been done on the *Helicobacter pylori* organism (*H. pylori*) in connection with acid reflux. This bacteria can result in a chronic, low-level inflammation of the stomach lining and is a major factor in producing the symptoms of acid reflux. So, using PPIs to suppress stomach acid does not treat the problem, only the symptoms. When we suppress stomach acid, we decrease the body's ability to kill this bacteria and so, we perpetuate the problem. Remember, heartburn can also be triggered by overeating, obesity, pregnancy, spicy foods, alcohol, coffee, citrus fruit and coffee. Digestion begins in the mouth and ends in the rectum. As food is broken into smaller pieces while we chew, it mixes with saliva, travels down the esophagus and into the stomach. In the stomach, the food mixes with hydrochloric acid, which is necessary to break down food particles. So, hydrochloric acid or stomach acid is necessary for digestion. If you reduce the amount of stomach acid using PPIs, you increase your risk of heartburn, GERD and chronic indigestion.

PPIs have been linked to increased risk for many serious health conditions, such as chronic kidney disease, pneumonia, osteoporosis, hip fractures, dementia, heart disease and heart attacks. Recent research also shows that people that take PPIs on a

daily basis have close to four times the risk of stomach cancer compared to those who took the drug once a week.

People who use PPIs often develop a dependence on them, so it is important to wean yourself off them gradually. If you try to stop these medications cold turkey, your heartburn symptoms will be severe. You can gradually lower your dose of the PPI until you get down to the lowest dose where you begin experiencing heartburn. Then you can start substituting with an over-the-counter H2 blocker like Zantac or Tagamet. Gradually wean yourself off the PPI over a period of several weeks. Next, you can gradually start to wean yourself off the H2 blocker over the next few weeks. As you do this, you can start making some lifestyle modifications, like eliminating caffeine, alcohol and nicotine. You'll want to encourage your body to make its own HCL (hydrochloric acid), so using a high quality sea salt (Himalayan) supplies the chloride, as well as 80 other trace minerals. You can also use a high quality betaine HCL, as it helps your stomach kill the *H. pylori* bacteria and helps you break down your food properly. Get your Vitamin D levels checked, as Vitamin D helps to increase production of antimicrobial peptides. Exercise, eliminate processed foods and sugars from your diet. Most of all, do NOT use antibiotics to kill the *H. pylori* bacteria.

Take control of your health and start decreasing and/or eliminating some of the useless medications that we are prescribed every day. We are responsible for our own health and longevity, however, sometimes we all need a little help and guidance along the way.



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IMPROVE YOUR LIFE!**

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- ↓ Diabetes
- ↓ Cholesterol
- ↓ Hormonal Imbalances
- ↓ Metabolic Syndrome
- ↓ Gluten Allergies
- ↓ Chronic Fatigue
- ↓ Gut Imbalances

Longevity is not a gift, it has to be earned.
Discover a medication-free approach to better health, better energy and longevity. **ARE YOU READY?**

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