



# The burning truth about proton pump inhibitors

Uncomplicated gastroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD, should be managed with a systematic approach to avoid possible side effects and complications of long-term proton pump inhibitor use.<sup>1,2</sup>



1. Lifestyle changes, such as smoking cessation, weight loss and avoiding trigger foods known to cause uncomplicated GERD, should be advocated for all patients.
2. For mild, intermittent symptoms use an antacid or H<sub>2</sub>-receptor antagonist.
3. For severe symptoms, use a short treatment course with a proton pump inhibitor.
  - Generics are available over-the-counter.
  - Step the therapy down to the lowest effective dose.
  - PPI therapy is best when taken 30 minutes before breakfast.

It's important to minimize your risk. Long term use of a PPI at high doses can lead to:

- Increased susceptibility to infection due to the low-acidity environment optimal for survival and growth of intestinal bacteria<sup>3</sup>
- Increased risk of fractures, especially in patients with osteoporosis or other risk factors<sup>4</sup>

Proton Pump Inhibitors	Formulary Status	Step Therapy	Typical Copayment <sup>5</sup>	Monthly Cost <sup>6</sup>
Omeprazole Tablets/Capsules (Prilosec, Prilosec OTC)	Preferred (Tier 1)	Not required	\$10	\$10-30
Pantoprazole Tablets (Protonix)	Preferred (Tier 1)	Not required	\$10	\$10
Lansoprazole (Prevacid Rx, Prevacid Solutab)	Preferred (Tier 1)	Required for BCN only	\$10	\$90-120
Aciphex, Dexilant, Nexium, Vimovo, Zegerid Rx Packet	Nonformulary (Tier 3)	Required	\$60	\$160-280

Coverage may not apply to Medicare Part D plans. Nonformulary drugs may not be covered depending on the member's drug rider.

1. *Drugs for Peptic Ulcer Disease and GERD*. Treatment Guidelines from *The Medical Letter* • Vol. 9 (Issue 109) • September 2011. [www.medicalletter.org](http://www.medicalletter.org).
2. DeVault K, Castell D. *Updated Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Gastro Esophageal Reflux Disease*. Am J. Gastroenterol 2005; 100:190-200. Blackwell Publishing 2005.
3. Bavishi et al. *Systematic review: the use of proton pump inhibitors and increased susceptibility to enteric infection*. Aliment Pharmacol Ther 2011; 34: 1269–1281. Blackwell Publishing Ltd 2011.
4. FDA. U.S Department of Health and Human Services. *FDA: Possible Fracture Risk with High Dose, Long-term Use of Proton Pump Inhibitors*. <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/2010/ucm213377.htm>. Release date May 25, 2010.
5. Based on the most common triple-tier plan design.
6. Based on discounted AWP or MAC for a 30-day supply.