

Acid Reflux Medications: Side Effects & Dangers Of Long Term Use

In the past few years, PPI drug use has increased widely — the primary reason being that these medications can be bought over the counter without a Doctor's prescription. The current medical opinion is that 50% of patients who are taking these medications do not have acid reflux and do not need these high-risk drugs. When someone takes the acid-lowering medicines for more than 12 weeks, the stomach fails to produce enough acid, and digestive enzymes to digest the food do not correctly. So the symptoms of discomfort and indigestion which appear following the use of these drugs become a side effect of poor digestion of the food. That forces the patient to keep on taking these medications for the wrong reason. Additionally, stomach acid makes an excellent barrier to kill the bacteria ingested in food. Taking acid-lowering medications destroys this capacity and may be responsible for bacterial overgrowth and pneumonia (see below).

The new scientific research supports that acid-lowering medicines should not be taken for over two weeks and never more than 12 weeks. In 2010 FDA (Federal Department of Agriculture) in the USA, which oversees drug safety issued safety warnings on the potential side effects of long term use of PPI acid reflux drugs. These include:

- a) ***Risk of fractures*** - Low acidity in the stomach reduces the absorption of calcium. That increases the risk of fractures such as wrist, spine, and hip fractures.
- b) ***Hypomagnesemia from reduced absorption of magnesium*** - Symptoms include weakness and muscle cramps, heart irregularity, and low blood pressure.
- c) ***Vitamin B12 deficiency*** – Decreased acidity in the stomach interferes with the absorption of vitamin B12.
- d) ***Diarrhea from infection with bacteria C. Difficile*** – Reduced acidity in the stomach increases the risk of this bacterial infection, which can cause severe diarrhea.
- e) ***Interstitial Nephritis or a kidney inflammation***
- f) ***Increased risk for cancer stomach***
- g) ***Increased risk for pneumonia***
- h) ***Rebound acidity***- Discontinuation of PPI medications may cause rebound acidity, which makes the patient dependent on the pill. Therefore, the PPI

drug dose must be reduced slowly over time to prevent this problem. Apple cider vinegar one to two tablespoons in a glass of water 30 mins before a meal can help with rebound acidity and indigestion effectively.