

Alternatives to Proton Pump Inhibitors

Patient _____

Many Canadians have symptoms caused by the acid in their stomachs. These symptoms can include heartburn, indigestion, bloating, and a feeling of fullness.

Whether or not you take a proton pump inhibitor (PPI) medication, there are things you can do that might help reduce your symptoms.

Proven lifestyle tips:¹

- Lose weight, if appropriate.
- Do not lie down for two to three hours after eating.
- Elevate the head of your bed (six to eight inches) using blocks or books. Don't add extra pillows because this could increase pressure around your stomach.
- Eat smaller meals.
- Stop or reduce the amount you smoke.

Might also be worth trying:²

- Avoid foods that you notice worsen your symptoms, such as: high-fat foods, coffee and caffeine, chocolate, garlic and onion, mint, overly spicy meals, carbonated beverages, and acidic foods (e.g., tomatoes and lemons).
- Limit alcohol.
- Eat a plant-based Mediterranean diet (while avoiding the foods previously mentioned).
- Drink alkaline water.
- Do not wear tight-fitting clothing.
- Sleep on your left side.

¹ Based on scientific evidence or strong recommendations by experts.

² Based on limited scientific evidence or anecdotal suggestion by experts.

If your symptoms occur only now and then, you may not need to take PPI medication. You can treat your symptoms using medications available at your local drug store without a prescription. There are two types of products you can use.

Antacids (products that neutralize acid):

Liquid or tablets (e.g., Gaviscon, Maalox, and Tums)

- They work fast (in five to 15 minutes) and last for one to two hours.
- They cost pennies per dose, especially store-brand antacids.

H2 Blockers (products that stop acid production):

Zantac, Pepcid, or generic ranitidine or famotidine

- They take approximately one hour for their effects to work and last up to 12 hours.
- They can cost as little as 25¢ per dose.

Consult your pharmacist for the best option for you.

Also, talk to your doctor about the other medications you take, because some can make acid symptoms worse. These include non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, some osteoporosis drugs, some heart and blood pressure drugs, some erectile dysfunction drugs, some asthma medications, and some sedatives.

If your symptoms don't go away within two weeks, or if they get worse, contact your doctor.

Doctor's signature: _____

Pharmacist's signature: _____

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