

What should I do if I develop problems?

You should see your doctor if your symptoms do not get any better, get worse or if you develop any of the following:

- Vomiting, especially if this contains blood or material that looks like coffee grounds
- Dark, sticky bowel movements
- Difficult or painful swallowing
- Unexplained weight loss
- Chest pain, chest pain that gets worse with or after exercise or chest pain that goes into your chin or left shoulder. These may be signs of a heart problem.

Can I do anything to improve my symptoms?

- Try to keep to a healthy weight
- Avoid food and drink that make your symptoms worse (for example, spicy or fatty foods, chocolate, coffee, cola drinks and orange juice)
- Eat meals at regular times
- Avoid large or late meals and avoid bending over or lying flat immediately after eating
- Avoid tight belts or clothing
- Avoid buying medications that can make your symptoms worse, such as some pain killers (ask your doctor or pharmacist which medications are safe to take)
- If your symptoms are worse at night and disrupt your sleep, try raising the head of your bed by 10–15 cm (4–6 inches) using blocks under the legs of your bed or use a wedge shaped pillow to raise your head
- If you drink more than two standard drinks of alcohol a day, reduce the amount.



STOP SMOKING!

Discuss ways to quit smoking with your doctor or pharmacist or visit your local stop smoking service.

In East Lancashire:

The Stop Smoking Service can be contacted on **0800 328 6297** or visit www.quitsquad.nhs.uk/index.php

In Blackburn with Darwen:

The Stop Smoking Service can be contacted on **01254 682037** or visit www.refreshbwd.com/service/stop-smoking-service-2



East Lancashire Health Economy
Medicine Management Board

www.elmmb.nhs.uk 

Patient Information Leaflet

Proton Pump Inhibitors e.g. lansoprazole, omeprazole and the management of dyspepsia & heartburn

With thanks to the Welsh Medicines Partnership

Dyspepsia

The main symptom of dyspepsia (or indigestion) is pain or discomfort in the upper abdomen.

Heartburn

Another symptom of dyspepsia is heartburn (also known as acid reflux). This is a burning feeling that rises from the upper abdomen or lower chest towards the neck.

Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs)

These medications reduce the amount of acid that your stomach makes. By lowering the acid level they can help to relieve the symptoms of dyspepsia and heartburn.

How long should you take a PPI for?

How long you need to take a PPI for will depend on why you are taking it as they can be used for a number of different conditions.

Some patients will need to take these medications long-term

People with certain conditions, such as severe oesophagitis, strictures, Barrett's oesophagus or Zollinger-Ellison syndrome, need long-term treatment with a PPI. People taking medications that can cause peptic ulcers may also need long-term treatment with a PPI.

Your doctor will be able to tell you if you have a condition that requires you to take a PPI long-term.

Starting your medication

To start with, you may be given a prescription for four weeks. If your symptoms continue then you may be prescribed another four weeks of treatment.

Many people find that after this time their symptoms are better. However, it is common for symptoms to come back again, sometimes after a number of months.

Long-term management

Unwanted side effects of long-term PPI treatment include increased risk of fractures, infections, and low magnesium. To help prevent any side effects that can be caused by long-term PPI use your treatment may be 'stepped down' to one of the following options:

1. **Reduced dose** – If you have taken a high dose PPI for several months, your doctor may reduce it to a lower dose.
2. **Take PPI only when needed** – You may be advised to take your PPI only when you have symptoms. When the symptoms are relieved (often after a few days) you stop taking the PPI.
3. **Stop PPI** – You may be advised to self-care by purchasing an antacid or 'alginate' if you experience symptoms. If this fails to help, your doctor may prescribe another short course of a PPI.

Stopping your PPI

Some people find that when they stop taking their PPI, their symptoms return and may even seem worse than before they started treatment. This is because if you take a PPI for more than a few weeks, your stomach will try to increase its ability to make acid. This means that for a while after you stop taking your PPI, the acid levels in your stomach may be higher than before you started treatment.

To help with these symptoms, if you have been taking a PPI for more than 8 weeks at a high dose, your doctor may advise that you take a lower dose for a few weeks before considering stopping completely.

If you have symptoms when you reduce your dose or stop your PPI we recommend you self-care by purchasing a type of medication called an antacid or 'alginate' which will help you until your acid levels return to normal. For more information speak to your community pharmacist.

