

# KPP *Klinical Update*

February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012

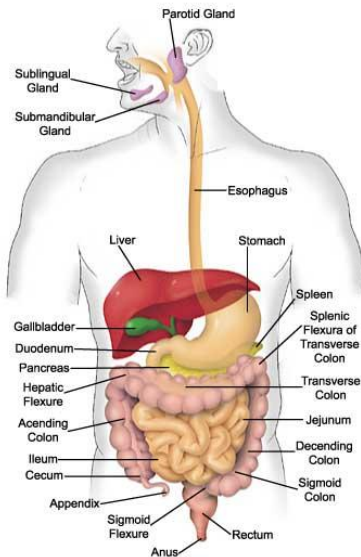
## Indigestion

Which medicines provide the best bang for the buck?

The human digestive track is a very complex system which utilizes both mechanical action, via muscle contractions, and chemical substances released by our mouth, stomach, and small and large intestines to break down food we eat into the raw nutrients necessary to fuel all bodily processes. Several of the chemicals our body produces during the digestion process are powerful enough to do the body harm. One of these substances is the hydrochloric acid our stomachs produce. Registering a pH of 1-2, this acid is as potent as the acids used by students in high school chemistry classes. To protect the

body from this harsh chemical, the stomach has closures, called sphincters, at both the inlet (from the esophagus) and the outlet (to the small intestine) which keeps the acid localized in the stomach. Additionally, inside the stomach there is a protective layer of mucous produced by cells in the stomach which creates a barrier between the acid and the stomach walls. When one of these protective measures break down, the acid comes into contact with tissue unable to protect itself in the acidic environment. The resulting tissue damage can range from simple indigestion after a big meal

to the formation of ulcers or esophageal deterioration which, in extreme cases, can cause severe health issues up to and including death.

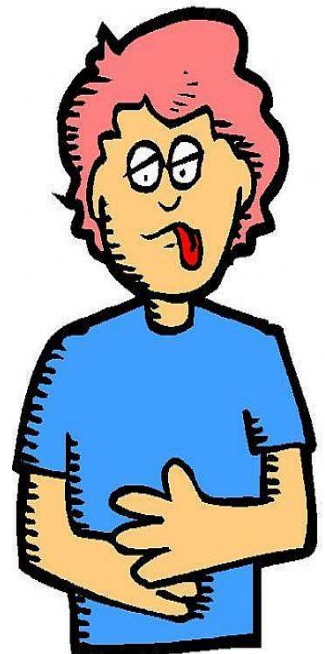


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### Common Causes and Remedies of Indigestion

Big meals can cause the stomach to produce too much acid overwhelming the protective mucosal lining of the stomach. Try eating smaller meals more frequently.

Both spicy and greasy foods have a tendency to cause the stomach to produce more acid than bland foods. Be smart about food choices if your stomach has been queasy.

Coffee and soda are acidic drinks. If possible, eat something while enjoying these beverages.

Eating a meal and then laying down puts strain on the top closure of the stomach leading to the esophagus. Try to eat at least 1-2 hours before going to bed.

Taking over-the-counter anti-inflammatory/pain medicines like aspirin, Advil, Ibuprofen, Aleve, and naproxen limit the stomach's ability to protect itself. Always take these medications with food or milk.

## The Pharmacological Solution to Indigestion and GERD (GastroEsophageal Reflux Disease)

As we have discovered, the main culprit of stomach ailments is stomach acid. Pharmacologists have utilized two pathways in order to provide therapies for patients suffering from all types of indigestion: reducing the stomach's ability to produce acid and neutralizing acid which has already been produced. Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) and a specialized class of antihistamines (H<sub>2</sub> blockers) are the two classes of medications that reduce the amount of acid the stomach makes. Antacids like Tums, Maalox, and Gaviscon utilize minerals to neutralize the stomach acid once it has already been produced.

| Generic/(Proprietary Name)                  | Brand Name                | Drug Class             |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Ranitidine</b> and Kroger ranitidine OTC | Zantac and Zantac OTC     | H <sub>2</sub> Blocker |
| <b>Famotidine</b> and Kroger famotidine OTC | Pepcid and Pepcid OTC     | H <sub>2</sub> Blocker |
| <b>Cimetadine</b> and Kroger cimetadine OTC | Tagamet and Tagamet OTC   | H <sub>2</sub> Blocker |
| Lansoprazole and Kroger lansoprazole OTC    | Prevacid and Prevacid OTC | PPI                    |
| Kroger omeprazole OTC                       | Prilosec OTC              | PPI                    |
| <b>Esomeprazole</b>                         | <b>Nexium</b>             | <b>PPI</b>             |
| <i>Omeprazole</i>                           | <i>Prilosec</i>           | <i>PPI</i>             |
| (Dexlansoprazole)<br>Generic not available  | Dexilant                  | PPI                    |
| (Rabeprazole)<br>Generic not available      | Aciphex                   | PPI                    |
| <b>Pantoprazole</b>                         | <b>Protonix</b>           | <b>PPI</b>             |

- Over the counter medicines are in blue, Rx only in green
- Formulary medicines are in **bold**, generic in *italics*
- High strength H<sub>2</sub> blockers are Rx only

## Buyer Beware!

Nexium and Dexilant are expensive brand name only medications which are very similar to other PPIs. The molecules which make up the active ingredients are virtually identical to another medication which may be cheaper and still deliver the same result.

- Nexium (esomeprazole) is similar to Prilosec (omeprazole) which has a generic available.
- Dexilant (dexlansoprazole) is similar to Prevacid (lansoprazole) which has a generic available.

\*\*\*\*\*If you are currently taking Nexium or Kapidex, ask your physician if another similar medication might work just as well at a fraction of the cost.

## Did You Know?

Benadryl, Tavist, Pepcid, and Zantac are all antihistamines but some work to clear congestion during an allergy attack while others reduce the amount of acid produced in the stomach. There are 2 main types of histamine receptors in the body. The type concentrated in the upper respiratory tract are called H<sub>1</sub> receptors while the other type, H<sub>2</sub> receptors, are concentrated in the digestive tract. So stick with Benadryl and Tavist during allergy season and rely on Zantac and Pepcid for relief after a big spicy meal.

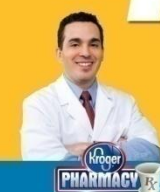
## Which Product Is Right for Me?

To treat sporadic cases of indigestion and heartburn, antacids can provide instant relief. Frequent occurrences can be prevented by adding either an over the counter H<sub>2</sub> blocker or PPI. The FDA recommends that if heartburn still persists after taking a 2 week course of medication or if you have to repeat the 2 week course more than 2 additional times in a year, you should check with your physician so he or she can check for underlying conditions. Remember, only your doctor is qualified to choose the right *long term* course of therapy for you. However, as with all medical decisions, Kroger Prescription Plans recommends you have a discussion with your physician regarding the desired outcome, interactions, any supplements you might be taking, and the monthly price of the medication.

Ranitidine and famotidine are on the Kroger \$4/\$10 list making the H<sub>2</sub> blocking drug class very affordable.

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