



Proton pump inhibitor drugs

Your plan helps you access proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), which treat heartburn and other stomach acid conditions. We look at the strongest research to find the PPIs that work best – and then make sure they're affordable for you.

Proton pump inhibitors treat stomach acid problems

Proton pump inhibitor (PPI) drugs treat heartburn, ulcers, acid reflux and GERD (also called gastroesophageal reflux disease). These drugs work by blocking the release of acid into the stomach. This helps prevent burning and other symptoms.

You have a choice of PPI drugs

Here's a step-by-step look at how PPIs are chosen for the drug list – a list of prescription drugs included in your plan.

Step 1: Clinical review and rating

First, doctors and pharmacists – who are not our employees – look at the best quality scientific research on PPIs. They use a detailed report prepared by our pharmacists to review the strongest clinical studies. This report starts with information from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) about each drug's approved uses, dosages and safety. It also shows how well drugs work and how safe they are.

The doctors and pharmacists also look at information that shows how these drugs work in real life, not just in trials. Finally, they look at all the data to rate which drugs will work the best for members like you.

Here's what the research says about PPIs:

- Nexium, Prevacid and Prilosec can be used in children and adults.
- Nexium is one of the most popular PPIs. It comes in liquid, tablet and capsule forms.
- All PPI drugs work well for heartburn, acid reflux and GERD. There aren't many differences in how fast or how long they work.
- All PPIs have few side effects. They include diarrhea, dizziness, headache and upset stomach.



Finding the right drugs for heartburn

If you sometimes have heartburn, you may get relief from antacids like Maalox, Mylanta, Rolaids and Tums. Other drugs called H2 blockers could also help. These include cimetidine, ranitidine, famotidine and nizatidine.

If those drugs don't work for you, a PPI may be an option. Talk to your doctor about the best way to treat your heartburn.

Step 2: Cost review

Next, we use the drug ratings from the first step. We look at how often doctors choose the best-rated drugs for patients. Then, we review drug costs to make sure the best medicines are affordable for you. We consider drug costs only after we've looked at how well the drugs work.

Step 3: Choosing drugs

Next, we choose PPI drugs for the drug list that are safe, work well and offer the best value. We decided these drugs should be added to the drug list:

Lower cost (generics)	Medium cost	Higher cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lansoprazole • omeprazole • pantoprazole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nexium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aciphex • Dexilant • Prevacid • Prilosec • Protonix

Check out these websites to learn more

Effective Health Care Program: Effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov

This website is from a government group called the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. It has a thorough guide on PPI drugs.

National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse:

digestive.niddk.nih.gov

This website has lots of details on heartburn, acid reflux and GERD.





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