

Supporting information when Stopping Proton Pump Inhibitors

For local adaption to align with individual Care Home
medicine policies

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Supporting Information when Stopping Proton Pump Inhibitors

Who is this information for?

This is aimed at residents in care homes who may have had this medication discontinued following a medication review. It may also be helpful for their Power of Attorney and carers in the care home.

What are Proton Pump Inhibitors?

Proton pump inhibitors or PPIs are a group of medicines, including lansoprazole and omeprazole, which are used to reduce the amount of stomach acid which is produced. As such they can be used to treat stomach ulcers and reflux disease. They are also sometimes used to prevent ulcers in individuals on medication which can damage the stomach lining.

Why do we need to stop them?

All medication has side effects and PPIs are no exception. When an individual is prescribed any medication the benefits are carefully weighed up against the risks of taking it. For PPIs these benefits often become less over time, for example once an ulcer has healed or once a medication it was started with has stopped.

Some of the long term side effects associated with PPIs include an increased fracture risk (so elderly individuals may be more likely to break a bone), low magnesium levels, problems with the kidneys, higher risk of C.difficile (infective diarrhoea) and an increased risk of pneumonia (a serious chest infection).

It is important as part of a person centred review to regularly consider if the benefit of any individual taking a PPI still outweighs the risks associated with it.

What are the alternatives?

For the majority of individuals who stop taking their PPI there won't be any need for any other medication. For individuals who have been taking them for a long time it is possible they will experience 'rebound reflux'. This is where the body adjusts to not having the medication and so there can be some symptoms of heartburn in the short term. This could be anything between one to three months. This can normally be safely managed by using over the counter antacids, such as Gaviscon Advance or Peptac liquid.

If symptoms persist ranitidine can also be prescribed by your GP surgery, this helps to protect against the acid in the stomach but has a different side effect profile. Finally if necessary it is also possible to go back onto the PPI, as a worsening of more severe symptoms show that the medication is still needed and the benefit does outweigh the risk.

Who can I ask if I still have questions?

If you still have concerns or would like to discuss your medication please contact your care home's CHAPS pharmacy professional:

NAME:..... Email:..... Tel:.....

