

# Medications for Acid Reflux

It is essential to know that all acid reflux medications provide only temporary symptom relief and do not cure or eliminate the disease. Long term use of these medications reduces healthy amounts of digestive acids and interfere with the function of essential digestive hormones secreted by the stomach. That eventually leads to indigestion, bloating, reduced absorption of essential minerals such as iron, calcium, and magnesium. It is for this reason that people who start taking acid-reflux medications continue taking these medications forever as they cannot get rid of their digestive symptoms.

Acid reflux medications fall into three categories; most are currently nonprescription and can be purchased easily without the doctor's orders. The acid reflux medications are the most overused drugs, and 50% of patients who take the drugs usually do not need these.

Three categories of acid reflux medications are:

**1. Antacids** - These drugs are short term solutions with the effect lasting an hour or two. Numerous preparations are available in the market, such as Alka-Seltzer, Milk of Magnesia, Gelusil, Gaviscon, Maalox, Roloids, Pepto Bismol, Tums, and many more.

**2. Histamine Antagonists** – These drugs are also called H2 blockers. Some common medications in this category are:

- Cimetidine (Tagamet)
- Ranitidine ( Zantac)
- Famotidine (Pepcid)
- Nizatidine (Axid)

**3. Proton Pump Inhibitors or PPI drugs** -These remain the most commonly prescribed acid reflux drugs Some common medications in this category are:

- Omeprazole (Prilosec)
- Lansoprazole (Prevacid)
- Rabeprazole (Aciphex)
- Pantoprazole (Protonix)
- Esomeprazole (Nexium)

*(Note: Current medical recommendation is that the acid reflux medications should be taken short term for two weeks, and no more than twelve weeks. Long term use can lead to significant side effects and health complications)*