

ATTENTION:

Recent studies have shown that in many cases patient who take Plavix (clopidogrel) and a class of medications called proton pump inhibitors (PPI's) for GERD or heartburn may be at higher risk of cardiac complications or death. If you are taking Plavix and any of the following PPI's, omeprazole (Prilosec), lansoprazole (Prevacid), rabeprazole (Aciphex), pantoprazole (Protonix), esomeprazole (Nexium), and Zegarid, a rapid release form of omeprazole you may be at risk.

Heart attack patients or patient who have had stents placed in their coronary arteries who take an acid-reducing proton pump inhibitor (PPI) drug like Prilosec or Nexium in combination with the antiplatelet drug Plavix are more likely to have a second heart attack or abrupt stent closure than patients who don't take PPIs, according to new research.

The findings confirm several smaller trials and one larger one, reported just weeks ago, suggesting that PPIs can inhibit the blood clot-inhibiting activity of Plavix (clopidogrel).

Along with aspirin, Plavix is routinely prescribed after a coronary stent, a heart attack or as part of treatment for heart conditions like unstable angina to prevent potentially life-threatening blood clots from forming.

PPIs, such as Prilosec, Nexium, Prevacid, Aciphex, and Protonix, are often prescribed as well to reduce the risk of gastric bleeding from the blood-thinning combination treatment. **But several recent studies suggest that patients who take Plavix and PPIs together have an increased risk for recurrent heart attacks and death from other heart-related causes.** In an effort to shed light on the issue, more than 8,000 patients treated for heart attacks or unstable angina at 127 Veterans Administration hospitals across the country were followed.

Plavix was prescribed to all the patients, and 64% were prescribed a PPI.

Over three years of follow-up, about 30% of the patients who took Plavix plus a PPI either died or were hospitalized for heart-related causes, compared to 21% of the patients who took the antiplatelet drug without a PPI.

Taking Plavix with a PPI at any time during the follow-up was associated with a 25% increase in risk for death or hospitalization.

If you are on these medications, please call 419-794-7700 to schedule an appointment. Please do not stop taking your Plavix until you are seen by your cardiologist.