

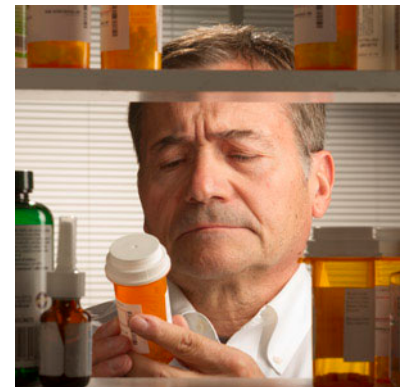


June 17, 2015 – Grand Rapids, MI

Acid Reflux or Heart Attacks?

One of the most frequently asked questions I get is what to do about acid reflux. By the time most people ask, it's a serious issue and they should see their physician. In most cases, they will be prescribed a proton-pump inhibitor or PPI. One of the people who uses a PPI is Paula. When she saw the headline "Heartburn Drugs May Boost the Risk of Heart Attacks," she asked me to check it out because she didn't want to have to choose between those two problems. Because I'm a great husband and I'd like to keep her around a while, it rose to the top of my research list.

Proton-pump inhibitors (PPI) have a specific purpose: they reduce the production of stomach acid. To keep it simple, protons equal acid; reducing protons means you reduce stomach acid, which means that you'll reduce acid reflux—stomach acid leaking back up into the esophagus where it can cause pain and scarring. If taking PPIs increases the risk of having a heart attack, that's a serious problem, especially because there are over 100 million PPI prescriptions written every year and it's now sold as an over-the-counter medication.



Researchers at Stanford University used a very interesting approach to finding out the relationship between PPIs and heart attacks (1): they data mined. They created a computer program—a very sophisticated program—to mine the medical records of over two million people. They collected data on acid reflux diagnoses, prescriptions, heart attacks, and some demographic information as well. How much data? Trillions of bits according to the Stanford researcher who primarily wrote the data-mining program. The program found that people who use PPIs had a 16% increase risk of having a heart attack.

Time for Paula to throw out her PPI and suffer the consequences of acid reflux? You, as well? Maybe not just yet. We'll take a closer look tomorrow and then I'll give you the bottom line on Friday.

Don't forget: the [Healthy Kidz + ADHD](#) webinar is tonight. There's still time to register and join me as I examine how you can help your kids have their best year ever.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

Reference: PLoS ONE 10(6): e0124653. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0124653.

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