DEPREScribing Guide

for PROTON PUMP INHIBITORS (PPIs)

(including omeprazole, pantoprazole, esomeprazole, lansoprazole, rabeprazole)

This guide provides deprescribing information that can be applied to written and/or verbal communication (in the form of “preferred language”) between clinicians, patients and/or carers. Adapt appropriately for individual patients.

Consider two steps when deprescribing:

1. Should I deprescribe?

2. How do I deprescribe?

**STEP 1: SHOULD I DEPREScribe? (PATIENT ASSESSMENT)**

Deprescribing triggers:

- Inappropriate indication, no current indication, presence or risk of adverse events, drug interaction, drug-disease interaction, poor adherence, or patient preference.

1a) Is there a documented indication or symptoms supporting continued use?

Inappropriate indication for continued regular use:

- Mild to moderate oesophagitis.
- Gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD) treated for 4-8 weeks (oesophagitis healed, symptoms controlled).
- Peptic ulcer disease treated for 2-12 weeks (from non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug [NSAID] and/or Helicobacter pylori [H. pylori]).
- Upper gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms without endoscopy, asymptomatic for 3 consecutive days.
- Intensive care unit (ICU) stress ulcer prophylaxis treated beyond ICU admission.
- Uncomplicated H. pylori treated for 2 weeks and asymptomatic.

Do not deprescribe if:

- Barrett’s oesophagus without consulting gastroenterologist.
- Chronic NSAID users with bleeding risk.
- Severe oesophagitis.
- Documented history of bleeding GI ulcer.

Consider whether the PPI is part of a prescribing cascade and confirm appropriateness of other drugs:

- Drugs that may cause or worsen GORD or cause peptic ulcer disease: e.g. NSAIDs, aspirin, corticosteroids, bisphosphonates, calcium channel blockers, nitrates, drugs with anticholinergic effects (e.g. tricyclic antidepressants) and benzodiazepines.
- Chronic use: increased risk of fractures with use >1 year, vitamin B12 deficiency with use >2 years.

1b) Are there adverse effects?

Consider potential adverse effects:

- Common: headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, constipation, flatulence.
- Increased risk of Clostridium difficile (C. difficile) infection, pneumonia, chronic kidney disease, hypomagnesaemia.
- Chronic use: increased risk of fractures with use >1 year, vitamin B12 deficiency with use >2 years.

1c) Is this medication likely to cause more harm than benefit?

See Evidence-based advice for additional information on risks of harm and benefits of continued use.

1d) Does the patient/carer agree with the recommendation to deprescribe?

Following provision of information, discussion and shared-decision making, the patient or carer has communicated that they would like to proceed with or decline the deprescribing recommendation.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE:**

(Adapt for each patient and medicine as appropriate)

_________ is currently taking ____________ for ____________, and is currently experiencing/at risk of ____________. The ____________ outweighs the ____________ for continued use of ____________.

Discussed with ____________ and ______________________________ deprescribing recommendation.
STEP 2: HOW DO I DEPRESCRIBE?  
(RECOMMENDATION AND MANAGEMENT)

2a) How to wean

Key Points

- Establish a supportive and trusting relationship with the patient to engage in complex/sensitive discussions.
- Accompany weaning with commencement of relevant non-pharmacological therapy. See Alternative management recommendations.
- In general, wean slowly by 50% or stop outright and use on-demand.
- If reason for deprescribing is a serious adverse effect, consider weaning faster.
- Provide advice to patient/carer on self-monitoring and what to do if symptoms re-occur.
- Organise appropriate follow up appointments with general practitioner (GP) (frequency determined by rate of weaning).

Initiation

(i) Lower the dose every 1-2 weeks (i.e. take the standard dose less frequently [e.g. from twice daily to once daily], or lower the dose at the same frequency [e.g. halve the dose])

OR

(ii) Stop outright and use PPI on-demand.

The deprescribing methods described above are equally effective and their use informed by the clinical scenario.

Adjustments depend on response

Adjust according to response (see Monitoring recommendations).

- If no recurrent symptoms occur, continue to wean and stop.
- Consider slower weaning when reducing to the final lowest dose. End treatment 2 weeks after administering the lowest dose.
- Consider alternate day dosing to aid with weaning if dosage forms are limited.

Adjustments in the case of recurrent symptoms

In the case of recurrent symptoms, revert to the previous lowest tolerated dose. Recommence weaning after 6-12 weeks at a slower weaning rate (e.g. reduce by 25% of daily dose each month) then stop.

If recurrent symptoms persist for > 7 days and interfere with normal activity, then test for H. pylori (and treat accordingly) and/or consider returning to the previous lowest tolerated dose.

(PREFERRED LANGUAGE: 
(Adapt for each patient and medicine as appropriate)

Recommend non-pharmacological replacement therapy to reduce reliance on PPIs.

Recommend gradually reducing to ______________________ for _______________ and reassess, then reduce to ______________________ for _______________ and then stop.

Follow up with GP ______________________ after discharge.

(e.g. pantoprazole 20mg daily) (e.g. 1 week)

(e.g. pantoprazole 40mg daily) (timeframe: e.g. 1 week)
2b) Alternative management

Non-pharmacological support
Use behavioural and lifestyle management strategies concurrently (e.g. avoid meals 2-3 hours before bedtime, consider whether weight loss is needed, avoid exercise after meals, elevate head of bed, quit smoking). Avoid dietary triggers (e.g. caffeine, alcohol, high fat meals, spicy food, citrus fruits, chocolate, carbonated beverages, tomato products).

Switching within drug class or consider alternative therapy
Manage rebound or occasional symptoms with on-demand PPI or on-demand over the counter antacid, H2 antagonists, or alginate; or with H2 antagonists daily. To consider other options, refer to [AMH-Gastrointestinal drugs].

2c) Monitoring

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<tr>
<th>Monitor short term (within days to weeks)</th>
<th>Monitor long term (4-12 weeks)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitor for rebound symptoms</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>In daily PPI exposure &gt; 4 weeks, rebound acid hypersecretion within ~2-8 weeks after discontinuation is likely. See Alternative management recommendations.</td>
<td><strong>Monitor for rebound or new symptoms</strong></td>
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<td>Recurrence of previous or new symptoms (e.g. heartburn, regurgitation, dyspepsia, epigastric pain, weight loss, loss of appetite, agitation) may occur 2 weeks after dose reduction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Common rebound symptoms (e.g. heartburn, regurgitation, dyspepsia) are usually mild, highly variable and can last up to several days to weeks, depending on the duration of PPI exposure.</td>
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<td>• If severe symptoms (e.g. epigastric pain, weight loss, loss of appetite, agitation, blood in vomit, black tarry stools, anaemia) occur, restart at lowest effective dose.</td>
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**PREFERRED LANGUAGE:**

Within 2 weeks of dose reduction, monitor for **mild** (e.g. heartburn, regurgitation, dyspepsia) or **severe** symptoms (e.g. epigastric pain, weight loss, loss of appetite, agitation).

Monitor for **new symptoms** within 4-12 weeks of dose reduction, including epigastric pain, weight loss, loss of appetite, or agitation.

Restart at lowest effective dose with retrial of weaning at 6-12 weeks.

**EVIDENCE-BASED ADVICE**

Effectiveness and safety
Long term PPI use is associated with significant harm from **adverse effects** such as fractures, kidney disease, *C. difficile* infection, pneumonia, and hypomagnesaemia.

Approximately 1 in 10 patients may experience recurrent symptoms after stopping a PPI.

In a meta-analysis, 16% of participants in the on-demand deprescribing group experienced lack of symptom control versus 9% of participants with no change in continuous daily PPI use (relative risk [RR] 1.71, 95% confidence interval [CI] 1.31 to 2.21).

Over 90% of people would be willing to stop one or more of their medicines if recommended by their doctor.
PPI use incurs financial burden to the patient and high costs to the health system (e.g. esomprazole costs the Australian government ~$140 million/year). Esomeprazole and pantoprazole were among the top 50 most commonly prescribed medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) in 2016-2017.9

Recommended duration of use
Limit drug treatment to short-term use of up to 8 weeks. Long-term use is not recommended, especially in older adults.

SUMMARISED PHRASING DURING HOSPITAL ADMISSION AND/OR AT DISCHARGE

When communicating deprescribing decisions to GPs at discharge, written and verbal communication should include information in the sequence of:

“Medicine, Intention, Rationale. Clear Plan (dose change, duration, follow up). Patient agreement”

Example:
Pantoprazole: Dose reduced due to risk of fracture (and other potential adverse effects) outweighing effects on heartburn. Pantoprazole 40mg reduced to pantoprazole 20mg daily. GP to consider reducing further by using “on demand” dosing with aim of stopping after 4-12 weeks. Patient agreed. Refer to www.nswtag.org.au/deprescribing-tools/

References