

Recent Reports Of Side Effects Related To Popular GI Medications May Make Manufacturers Sick To their Stomachs

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Recent studies in several highly regarded medical journals have linked some of the most popular medications on the market for fairly common gastrointestinal issues to an increased risk of developing kidney disease. With over \$7 billion in annual sales, Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPIs) are one the most prescribed classes of drugs ever. Some of the most popular brands of PPIs are:

- Prilosec
- Nexium
- Prevacid
- AciPhex

Making this problem potentially more widespread, PPIs are now available in both prescription and over-the-counter form. And consequently, advertisements for the most popular PPIs are popping up all over television and radio stations, claiming that by taking one pill a day users can be heartburn free. PPIs have been used to treat a variety of common gastrointestinal ailments, including:

- Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)
- Stomach ulcers
- Inflammation of the esophagus

However, the regular, prolonged use of these common medications may not be as safe as once thought. Recent studies suggest that the use of PPIs may increase the risk of damage to the kidneys by as much as 20% to 50%. Injuries that have been associated with PPI use include:

- Acute renal failure
- Chronic kidney disease
- Interstitial nephritis
- End stage renal disease

Damage to the kidneys can result in a gradual loss of kidney function over the course of several months, or even years. Because the symptoms associated with decreased kidney function may not even be noticeable at first, kidney disease may go untreated and develop into end-stage renal disease. Symptoms associated with a loss of kidney function may include:

- Nausea
- A change in urine output
- Fluid retention, especially in the legs and feet
- Weight gain
- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Seizures
- Coma

A decline in kidney function can have a significant impact on someone's health. The kidneys play a key role in removing waste from the blood while retaining vital nutrients needed by the body. As kidney function declines, the levels of waste and toxins can build up in the body can result in damage to not only the kidney, but other vital organs as well.

With other treatment alternatives available, current users of PPIs may want to consult with prescribing physicians or pharmacists about the best treatment option for their particular condition, or if they experience symptoms related to kidney failure.

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