



Digestive System Medication Information

Why would I have to take these medications after my transplant?

Some of the immunosuppressive medications you have to take after your transplant can cause stomach problems. Cellcept[®] may cause some nausea where as the prednisone may cause stomach ulcers. Taking medications that protect your digestive system may prevent these side effects from occurring.

What are the different names of these medications?

There are a few different classes of drugs used to protect the digestive system. There are acid blockers, antacids, and proton pump inhibitors (PPI). Drugs in the acid blocker category are Tagament[®] (cimetidine), Zantac[®] (ranitidine), Pepcid[®] (famotidine) and Axid[®] (nizatidine). Some of the common antacids that you can buy over the counter at your pharmacy include Maalox[®], Mylanta[®], Riopan[®], Tums[®] and Rolaids[®]. Prilosec[®] (omeprazole) and Prevacid[®] (lansoprazole) are currently the only PPI's that you can buy over the counter at your pharmacy. All of the other PPI's such as Aciphex[®] (rabeprazole), Protonix[®] (pantoprazole), and Nexium[®] (esomeprazole) available only with a prescription. Protonix[®] is our agent of choice however you may take which ever PPI your insurance company covers. Reglan[®] is another drug we use sometimes to increase the movement in your gi tract and to promote digestion. It is most often used in diabetics with a condition know as gastroparesis.

How long will I have to take these?

If you were taking a PPI prior to the transplant for severe reflux or GERD you may continue taking this agent after your transplant. If you were not taking a PPI prior to your transplant you will be started on an acid reducer such as famotidine or ranitidine after the transplant. Most patients only stay acid reducers for the first few months after their transplant. Kidney transplant recipients are asked to stay on the acid reducers for 1 month after the transplant. Liver transplant recipients are asked to stay on acid reducers for 3 months after the transplant.

Do these medications interact with any other drugs?

There aren't many significant interactions seen with these agents and other drugs. It is important not to take and acid blocker with a PPI because they will not work when taken together. PPI's more recently have been show to interact with anti-platelet drugs such as Plavix. If you are started on Plavix and you are taking a PPI you should discuss this with your doctor. Reglan[®] can sometimes increase your tacrolimus or cyclosporine levels but this is something your doctor will monitor.

Are there side effects to these drugs?

The most common side effects of seen with these agents are nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, difficulty sleeping and headache.

Please direct your medication questions to
your transplant coordinator or transplant pharmacist.