



## **Prescribing Policy for Supply of Indigestion and Heartburn Remedies on FP10**

**North East Essex CCG does not support the prescribing of OTC antacids and alginates for treatment of dyspepsia and non – erosive gastro-oesophageal (GORD) on FP10 for adults.**

Dyspepsia, heartburn and gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD) can often be treated with self-help measures and over-the-counter medicines.

### **Recommendations**

Review medication - Some medications may cause dyspepsia—these should be stopped and/ or changed to an alternative if possible.

Patients with ‘alarm features’ e.g. bleeding, weight loss, recurrent vomiting, dysphagia should be referred for urgent endoscopy. Patients over 55 with unexplained, recent onset dyspepsia that has not responded to treatment should have an urgent referral for investigation.

### **Encourage patients to:**

- Eat smaller and more frequent meals, rather than three large meals a day – don't eat or drink alcohol within three or four hours before going to bed, and avoid having their largest meal of the day in the evening.
- Avoid anything they identified as triggers for their symptoms – common triggers include coffee, chocolate, tomatoes, alcohol, and fatty or spicy food.
- Avoid wearing tight clothing – clothes that are tight around the tummy may make their symptoms worse.
- Raise the head of their bed by up to 20cm (8 inches) – placing a piece of wood or blocks underneath one end of their bed may reduce symptoms at night; don't just use extra pillows, as this can put a strain on their tummy.
- Try to relax – stress can make heartburn and GORD worse, so learning relaxation techniques may help if they feel stressed.
- Maintain a healthy weight – if they are overweight, losing weight may help reduce their symptoms.
- Stop smoking – smoke can irritate your digestive system and may make your symptoms worse.

### **Do not prescribe antacids or alginates when required PRN or for ≤ 2 weeks**

- Antacids e.g. Alu-cap, Maalox, magnesium carbonate, magnesium trisilicate, Maalox plus
- Alginates e.g. gaviscon, peptic, acidex, gaviscon advance

**Alginates such as gaviscon for use in pregnancy need not be prescribed as they can be bought from a pharmacy**

The above list is not conclusive and similar products must not be prescribed.

#### Reference

- BNF online(April 2017) ‘Dyspepsia and gastro-oesophageal reflux disease’, Available at: <https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/formulary/bnf/current/1-gastro-intestinal-system/11-dyspepsia-and-gastro-oesophageal-reflux-disease> (Accessed: 10/05/17)
- NHS Choices (2016) ‘Heartburn and gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD) - Treatment ’, Available at: <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Gastroesophageal-reflux-disease/Pages/Treatment.aspx> (Accessed: 10/05/17)