


FDA Alerts on Proton Pump Inhibitors



The FDA has issued two recent alerts regarding the use of proton pump inhibitors (PPIs). This class of medication is used extensively in workers' compensation. PPIs are used to treat heartburn, acid reflux and to reduce the risk of gastrointestinal ulcers from the chronic use of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Examples of PPIs include Prilosec™ (omeprazole) and Prevacid™ (lansoprazole) which are available over-the-counter (OTC) and Nexium™, Aciphex™ and Protonix™ (pantoprazole) which are available by prescription.

The first FDA alert applies only to those PPIs available OTC. These products no longer require a notice warning consumers of the increased risk of hip, wrist and spine fractures. This risk is highest in patients taking large doses of PPIs or taking the medication for a year or longer. If consumers follow the label instructions and limit the use of these products, the risk for fractures is minimal. The warning still applies to those patients using PPIs for a year or longer at their doctor's recommendation.

The second FDA alert applies to those patients taking PPIs for a year or longer. These patients may develop low levels of magnesium, which puts them at a higher risk for seizures, irregular heartbeats and muscle spasms. Patients may not display any signs of low magnesium, so doctors are advised to periodically check magnesium levels and provide magnesium supplements, if necessary.

For more information on either of these recent PPI alerts, please visit www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch.

