FOR PHARMACISTS

AN EXPANDING COMMUNITY PHARMACIST SERVICE FOR GORD: UNPACKING CLINICAL MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR PHARMACISTS

As the expansion of pharmacist services continues across Australia, more community pharmacists will be able to prescribe and manage treatment for reflux and GORD.[1] Though guidance varies for pharmacist PPI prescribing, there is a **consistent emphasis on the need to step down PPI therapy** once symptoms are controlled, and the role of **alginate-antacid combinations as a first-line treatment option for mild intermittent symptoms.**[2-5]

Key takeaways from the latest GORD management guidelines for pharmacists

	NSW Health Pharmacist Practice Standards[2,3]	QLD Health Community Pharmacy Clinical Practice Guideline[3,4]	ACP Management of Reflux: A guideline for pharmacists[5]
First-line pharmacotherapy for mild intermittent symptoms	**Antacid-alginate combination***	**Antacid-alginate combination***	**Antacid-alginate combination**
First-line pharmacotherapy for GORD/ frequent symptoms	**Standard dose PPI***	**Standard dose PPI***	**Standard dose PPI**
Duration of initial PPI trial	**Up to 4 weeks**	**Up to 8 weeks**	**Up to 14 days†**
Criteria at follow up	• If symptoms are controlled, **initiate step-down therapy** • If symptoms are not controlled after 4 weeks, **refer to a medical practitioner**	• If symptoms are controlled, **initiate step-down therapy*** • If there is no improvement within 8 weeks, **refer to an appropriate healthcare provider**	• If symptoms are controlled, **initiate step-down therapy** • If symptoms persist at 2 weeks, **offer an additional 14-day course** • If control still remains inadequate, **refer to GP**

**Per the Therapeutic Guidelines: Gastro-oesophageal reflux in adults.[3]*
†For pharmacists with capability under the community pharmacy GORD service, an empiric trial of PPIs for 4 to 8 weeks is recommended as best practice in patients with no alarm symptoms.[5]
Refer to the full guidelines for details on patient eligibility and management considerations.

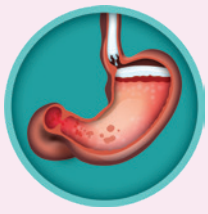
The ACP guideline also recommends alginates as adjunct treatment options across several phases of PPI therapy[5]

Initiation
To help manage symptoms while waiting for acid inhibition to reach steady state (~3 days)[5]

Breakthrough night-time symptoms during daily PPI therapy
Likely to respond to an antacid-alginate preparation[5]

Step-down
To help address breakthrough symptoms resulting from rebound acid hypersecretion[5]

Alginates support reflux management beyond acid inhibition



***Acid inhibition has its limits*:** While the acid component of refluxate accounts for most symptoms of reflux and oesophagitis, non-acid components of refluxate such as pepsin and bile can also contribute.[6,7]

Alginates have a different mechanism of action to PPIs, forming a buoyant, protective 'raft' on top of stomach contents that physically blocks all gastric contents from entering the oesophagus – including pepsin and bile, thus helping to prevent oesophageal damage from these aggressors in addition to relieving reflux symptoms.[8-10]

As pharmacists deliver more reflux management services, think beyond PPIs – consider how the full OTC reflux toolkit, including alginates, can help support optimal patient outcomes

ACP, Australasian College of Pharmacy; GORD, gastro-oesophageal reflux disease; GP, general practitioner; NSW, New South Wales; OTC, over-the-counter; PPI, proton pump inhibitor; QLD, Queensland.

GAVISCON

OTC REFLUX MANAGEMENT WITH GAVISCON

A range of reflux medicines for the spectrum of patient needs, including the only currently registered and available range of alginate products for reflux relief in Australia.

Alginate

First-line medicine option for infants ≥1 year old who don't respond to diet or lifestyle measures[5]

GAVISCON INFANT

An alginate-based powder that reacts with stomach acid to form a gel, which **thickens and stabilises the stomachs contents** to help reduce reflux and regurgitation.[11]

- **Suitable for**: infants and children >1 year of age* | **Available in**: Sachets 30s

Antacid

On-demand option for mild intermittent or breakthrough symptoms[5]

GAVISCON CHEWING GUM

An initial antacid option (calcium carbonate 600mg) for mild reflux in a unique chewing gum format for fast, convenient, and great-tasting relief of mild heartburn & indigestion.

- **Suitable for**: adults and children 12+ years
- **Available in**: Sugar Free Cool Mint 10s and 20s

Antacid-alginate combination

First-line medicine option for mild/intermittent symptoms + adjunct therapy option during PPI initiation, step-down or breakthrough symptoms[5]

GAVISCON

Forms a protective barrier on top of stomach contents to physically block reflux from entering the oesophagus.[8,9]

- **Suitable for:** adults and children 6+ years
- **Available in:** Peppermint Tablets 24s and 48s, Peppermint Liquid 600ml, Aniseed Liquid 600ml

GAVISCON DUAL ACTION

Works in two ways to relieve heartburn & indigestion: neutralises stomach acid, and forms a protective barrier on top of stomach contents.[8,9,12]

The liquid formulation **starts to soothe from just 4 minutes**[13] – also available in a **convenient liquid sachet** format for on-the-go relief.

- **Suitable for**: adults and children 6+ years
- **Tablets available in**: Peppermint 16s, 32s, 48s, Mixed Berry 16s, 48s
- **Liquids available in**: Peppermint 300ml, 600ml, Mixed Berry 300ml, 600ml
- **Liquid Sachets available in**: Peppermint 12s, 24s

GAVISCON EXTRA STRENGTH

Effective reflux relief in **only half the dose of Gaviscon**, with the liquid formulation suitable for use during **pregnancy and breastfeeding**.

- **Suitable for**: adults and children 12+ years
- **Available in**: Peppermint Tablets 24s and 60s, Peppermint Liquid 300ml, Aniseed Liquid 300ml

PPI

First-line medicine option for frequent/severe symptoms of GORD + second-line option for mild intermittent symptoms[5]

GUARDIUM ACID REFLUX RELIEF

An OTC PPI (esomeprazole 20mg) from the makers of Gaviscon – **24-hour protection** from frequent heartburn in just 1 daily tablet.

- **Suitable for**: adults 18+ years | **Available in**: Tablets 7s and 14s

Comorbid reflux and constipation? GI presentations can be complex, with patients often suffering overlapping conditions – research suggests people with reflux may be more likely to also experience constipation.[14,15]

For customers aged 12+ years with constipation, consider **Senokot Dual Action with Softener** for effective overnight relief:

- A combination laxative containing **sennosides to stimulate muscles in the bowel**, and **docusate sodium to soften stools**[16-18]
- Guidelines recommend trialling a senna + docusate combination as an alternative or adjunct therapy when bulk-forming or osmotic laxatives are ineffective or poorly tolerated[6]
- **Combining different laxatives in one tablet may be more beneficial** than large doses of a single laxative[19]

LEARN MORE: CPD article
Navigating the twists and turns of the GI tract: one muscle at a time, with John Bell AM

*Not to be used in infants <1 year old, except under medical supervision; refer to GP for advice.

CPD, continuing professional development; GI, gastrointestinal; GORD, gastro-oesophageal reflux disease; GP, general practitioner; OTC, over-the-counter; PPI, proton pump inhibitor.

Gaviscon Infant Powder for Oral Suspension is for regurgitation and gastric reflux for infants and young children. Contains 225mg sodium alginate and 87.5mg magnesium alginate per dose. **Gaviscon Chewing Gum** is for the relief of heartburn and indigestion. Contains 600mg calcium carbonate per gum. **Gaviscon** is for the relief of heartburn and indigestion. Liquids: Contains (per 10mL dose): 500mg sodium alginate, 267mg sodium bicarbonate, 160mg calcium carbonate. Tablets: Each tablet contains 250mg sodium alginate, 133.5mg sodium bicarbonate and 80mg calcium carbonate. **Gaviscon Extra Strength** is for the relief of heartburn and indigestion. Liquids: Contains (per 10mL dose): 1000mg sodium alginate, 200mg potassium bicarbonate, 200mg calcium carbonate. Tablets: Each tablet contains 500mg sodium alginate, 267mg sodium bicarbonate and 160mg calcium carbonate. **Gaviscon Dual Action** is for the relief of heartburn and indigestion. Liquids: Contains (per 10mL dose): 500mg sodium alginate, 213mg sodium bicarbonate, 325mg calcium carbonate. Liquid Sachets: Contains (per 10mL dose): 500mg sodium alginate, 213mg sodium bicarbonate, 325mg calcium carbonate. Tablets: Each tablet contains 250mg sodium alginate, 106.5mg sodium bicarbonate and 187.5mg calcium carbonate. **Guardium Acid Reflux Relief** is for the symptomatic relief of frequent heartburn, acid regurgitation and other symptoms associated with gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD). Tablets: Each enteric-coated tablet comprises enteric-coated pellets with esomeprazole magnesium equivalent to esomeprazole 20mg. **Senokot Dual Action with Softener contains total sennosides (calculated as Sennoside B) 8mg and docusate sodium 50mg**. For the overnight relief and treatment of constipation.

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