

## *Dr. Goldman's Book Reviews*

### **WHY STOMACH ACID IS GOOD FOR YOU**

Natural Relief from Heartburn, Indigestion, Reflux &  
GERD

By

**Jonathan V. Wright, MD  
and Lane Lenard, Ph. D.**

M. Evans and Company, Inc, New York

Indigestion, acid reflux and GERD (gastro-esophageal reflux disease) are extremely commonly diagnosed and treated conditions in America today. Treatment of these conditions with over-the-counter antacids as well as various prescription and now non-prescription medications that inhibit the production of stomach acid, are now a huge market. The total market for all these medications amounts to billions of dollars each year. Although originally used only for occasional indigestion, millions of people use these medications daily for years. Drs. Wright and Lenard describe the dangers of use of these medications. They also describe alternative treatments. Somewhat repetitive, the 170 pages of this book could have been compressed into about half the space but it is still a fairly easy and quick read. **I strongly recommend it.**

I agree with Dr. Wright that overuse of the stomach acid inhibiting drugs, (Zantac, Pepcid, Axid, Prilosec and Nexium are the most popular) is one of the most significant long-term health problems in America. Recently (January 2007) an article was published linking long-term use of these medications with increased rates of hip fracture. The adverse effects of elimination of natural and necessary production of stomach acid are many. The hip fracture increase is probably because of poor absorption of calcium and perhaps also vitamin D. Abnormal intestinal bacterial growth resulting from loss of stomach acid may cause adult onset food allergies, stomach cancer, and possibly even rheumatoid arthritis and other autoimmune diseases. It is rare that physicians recognize the link between the onset of these diseases and acid reflux or the medications used to treat it. Without normal stomach acid, Vitamin B12 is also lost and proteins are digested poorly. Gallstones also increase. Low stomach acid is also connected with childhood asthma and possibly Type 1 or Juvenile Diabetes.

Drs. Wright and Lenard present a careful, clear, step-by-step analysis of the problem. Then they show how to treat the original acid reflux. They also describe how to withdraw from the antacids and the acid inhibiting medications and restore health. Dr. Wright has been in general practice for over thirty years and has treated thousands of patients. He reads widely. He is closely associated with many Naturopaths and the schools of Naturopathic medicine in the Seattle area. He is constantly looking for safe,

physiologic ways to treat patients, rather than using patented medications, which frequently carry higher risks, side effects, and usually greater cost.

I think this is an excellent book for anyone suffering from indigestion and acid reflux and especially anyone taking acid suppressing medications on a regular basis.

Robert P. Goldman, MD