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Over-the-Counter Drug as Likely to Relieve Heartburn, Reflux as Prescriptions Costing \$2,400 a Year Prilosec OTC Chosen as *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drug*

(Washington, D.C.) – People who take prescription drugs for heartburn, ulcers or acid-reflux disease could save more than \$200 a month by considering **over-the-counter Prilosec**, the *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drug* in the category known as proton pump inhibitors (PPIs).

A Consumers Union comparison of PPIs released today indicates that nonprescription **Prilosec OTC (omeprazole)** is just as likely as prescription PPIs to relieve heartburn and ulcers, and promote healing for most people with gastroesophageal reflux disease, at a savings of up to \$2,400 a year.

Prilosec OTC costs about 79 cents a day, while prescription PPIs can range up to \$8 a day. The Consumers Union analysis found it as effective as the more expensive alternatives for most people.

“Some of the proton pump inhibitors are widely advertised and quite costly, and many doctors believe they may be overused,” said Gail Shearer, director of health policy analysis for Consumers Union.

“We urge people to check with their doctor to determine if they really need one of these medicines, and to consider the non-prescription drug, particularly if they have no health insurance or prescription drug coverage,” Shearer added.

The analysis recommends that people with drug coverage check to see if their insurer provides a discount coupon for Prilosec OTC. If not, they should talk with their doctor about choosing the PPI that has the lowest out-of-pocket cost under their insurance plan.

Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs is an educational and outreach initiative that will compare a variety of prescription drugs on price, effectiveness and safety to help consumers and their doctors identify the most effective and affordable medicines. Consumers can download reports from the free website, www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org, of the first three drug categories reviewed: cholesterol-lowering statins, PPIs, and arthritis and pain medicines. Each month, *CRBestBuyDrugs.org* will feature a report on another drug category.

Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs combines evidence-based research on the comparative effectiveness and safety of prescription drugs with national-level data on drug prices. The information on drug effectiveness is derived from the Drug Effectiveness Review Project (DERP)

and price information based on average retail prices paid in cash by consumers at the pharmacy. The CU reports are peer-reviewed by medical experts in the particular drug category.

Comparative Effectiveness of PPIs¹

Generic Name with dose per day	Brand Name	Complete Symptom Relief (% of patients)	Esophageal Healing at 8 Weeks (% of patients)	Relapse Prevention (% of patients)
Esomeprazole 40mg	Nexium	60-70%	92%	93%
Lansoprazole 30mg	Prevacid	60-70%	87%	NA
Omeprazole 20mg	Prilosec Prilosec OTC	60-70%	86%	86%
Pantoprazole 20mg	Protonix	60-70%	91%	86%
Rabeprazole 20mg	Aciphex	60-70%	91%	NA

1. Effectiveness data presented for those PPI dosage strengths that have been studied to date

PPI Price Comparison

Generic Name with dose per day	Brand Name ¹	Average Monthly Cost ²
Esomeprazole 20 mg	Nexium	\$171
Esomeprazole 40 mg	Nexium	\$165
Lansoprazole 15mg delayed release lingual tablets	Prevacid	\$133
Lansoprazole 30 mg delayed release lingual tablets	Prevacid	\$126
Lansoprazole 15mg sustained release tablets	Prevacid	\$164
Lansoprazole, 30 mg sustained release tablets	Prevacid	\$169
Lansoprazole 30mg enteric coated capsules	Prevacid	\$159

Lansoprazole 15mg delayed release suspension packets	Prevacid	\$172
Lanzoprazole 30 mg delayed release suspension packets	Prevacid	\$162
✓ Omeprazole 20 mg	Prilosec OTC³	\$24
Omeprazole 10mg sustained release capsules	Prilosec	\$133
Omeprazole 20mg sustained release capsules	Prilosec	\$154
Omeprazole 40mg sustained release capsules	Prilosec	\$245
Omeprazole 10mg sustained release capsules	Generic	\$120
Omeprazole 20mg sustained release capsules	Generic	\$119
Pantoprazole 20mg	Protonix	\$145
Pantoprazole 40mg	Protonix	\$136
Rabeprazole 20mg	Aciphex	\$165

1. "Generic" indicates drug sold by generic name, omeprazole

2. Prices reflect nationwide retail average for September 2004, rounded to nearest dollar; data provided by NDCHealth, a healthcare information company.

3. This is a non-prescription (over-the-counter) version of omeprazole available at any drug store.

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