

# Acid suppression medications linked to serious gastrointestinal infections

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This photograph depicts *Clostridium difficile* colonies after 48hrs growth on a blood agar plate; Magnified 4.8X. *C. difficile*, an anaerobic gram-positive rod, is the most frequently identified cause of antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD). It accounts for approximately 15–25% of all episodes of AAD. Credit: CDC

In a population-based study from Scotland, use of commonly-prescribed acid suppression medications such as proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) was linked with an increased risk of intestinal infections with *C. difficile* and *Campylobacter* bacteria, which can cause considerable illness.

Compared with individuals in the community who did not take acid suppression medications, those who did had 1.7-times and 3.7-times increased risks of *C. difficile* and *Campylobacter*, respectively. Among hospitalized patients, those using the medications had 1.4-times and 4.5-times increased risks, respectively.

Although acid suppression therapy is often considered relatively free from side effects, the findings suggest that there are significant adverse gastrointestinal consequences of their use. "Users of these medications should be particularly vigilant about food hygiene as the removal of stomach acid makes them more easily infected with agents such as *Campylobacter*, which is commonly found on poultry," said Prof. Thomas MacDonald, senior author of the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* study.

**More information:** *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* [DOI: 10.1111/bcp.13205](https://doi.org/10.1111/bcp.13205)

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