

Current affairs from your family doctors, early 2025

1. Wearing **masks** when visiting the doctor is **recommended** for everyone, in the months when many people cough. For people who also go to the doctor because of a cough or fever themselves, a mask is **mandatory**.



2. Due to the decreasing number of GP practices, there is more work per GP. This can go smoothly if consultations are held all day long (in our practice, continuously from 8:00 to the evening). Like all GPs, we have to **limit home visits to those who are truly unable to travel**. The disadvantages of organizing home visits are:
 - a. Less thorough examination (no examination bed, less material)
 - b. More time investment, which means the doctor can see fewer people per day (people with more serious illnesses may be wrongly postponed).

If you do not have transport, you should still try to talk to acquaintances and make the journey to the practice yourself. Your waiting time with us is usually very short, thanks to good organization and our large group of employees.

3. From 16 February, GPs will no longer be paid to discuss **results by telephone**. However, nothing will change in our practice; we will continue to offer this service. Between 13:15 and 13:45, a doctor is always directly available to briefly discuss a result by telephone. We would like to remind you that this is intended to briefly mention a few figures, and a short conclusion: "it's okay, there is nothing urgent" or... "there are still a few problems that we would best discuss in a consultation". We would like to ask you not to go into each figure at length on the telephone, as this unnecessarily extends the waiting time of the caller after you. If you want to see all the figures explained in detail, you can also book an appointment immediately after a planned blood test or other test. It is also best to come by if your treatment needs to be started or changed.
It is not permitted to explain results by email, partly due to privacy legislation.

4. The government and the professors want so-called **stomach protectors** (technical term 'PPI'), such as omeprazole and pantoprazole (e.g. Pantomed) to be used **less**. The name "stomach protectors" is not a name that clearly indicates what these medicines do. They reduce the acidity of the stomach, but also of the intestine. As a result, the intestines function less well. Important substances such as magnesium and lime (calcium) are less well absorbed. Bacteria are also less well killed in the stomach. These are serious disadvantages of these medicines.

In case of rising acid in the esophagus, you can do other things besides taking these pills: eat lighter meals, limit gassy drinks, avoid salt and spicy herbs, do not lie down too quickly after a meal, and lose weight if necessary.

As a GP we are required to prescribe this medication less: fewer boxes and fewer large boxes. Two situations can occur:

- a) Are you taking this after proven ulcers of the esophagus or because of simultaneous intake of cancer medication or higher doses of cortisone? Or are you taking it briefly, together with anti-inflammatories? Then nothing changes.
- b) Are you only taking this because of known acid reflux or hiatal hernia for what you feel yourself? Then try taking this medication less. Someone who has been taking this for a long time may miss it for a few days when he interrupts taking it, and then feel some acid coming, but after a few days that is over. We would like you to try this...

If you have any questions about this, please ask the doctor or nurse in our practice. You are also welcome to ask questions about other (all) **medications** you are taking. You can then make an appointment for 'prevention' with the nurse.

- 5. Our **building will be renovated** again in the coming months . We will provide a counter for the nursing staff where you can speak to someone if you have a question when you come in. (Our nurses are usually there from 8-12 and 12.30-16.30). We will also provide an extra, fifth consultation room, also thinking of more staff members in the future. We hope to limit the inconvenience, but there may be some inconvenience from noise and dust, and unclad walls for a short time. Apologies in advance.

This text and our previous advice can be found on our website. Advice per disease and about vaccination can also be found there! See <https://www.medikwatrecht.be/en/prevention-and-vaccination/>

Kind regards

Drs Deprost-Venneman-Rahoens-De Keyzer

Nurses Jolien and Marlies