

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

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EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE: 3 p.m. (CT) Tuesday, May 7, 1996

ANTI-ULCER DRUG AND ANTACID COMBO MAY PROVIDE ADDED RELIEF FOR HEARTBURN AND INDIGESTION

DALLAS — May 7, 1996 — Taking a popular over-the-counter anti-ulcer drug with an antacid tablet may prolong relief from heartburn and indigestion, indicates a gastroenterology study at the Dallas Veterans Affairs Medical Center and UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas.

Dr. Mark Feldman, chief of medical service at VAMC and a vice chairman of internal medicine at UT Southwestern, published the results of his study in the May 7 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

In the first study of its kind, Feldman compared the stomach acid reduction abilities of a 10 milligram dose of famotidine (Pepcid AC) to 1000 mg of a calcium carbonate antacid tablet (Tums). Eighteen healthy people were part of the study.

Each volunteer randomly received one of the three treatments: famotidine, calcium carbonate antacid tablets or a placebo. The participants then tested the two other treatments.

Feldman found that the antacid took effect within 30 minutes but lasted only an hour. The famotidine dose did not begin neutralizing gastric acid for 90 minutes but lasted at least nine hours.

"We can conclude that in order to quickly reduce stomach acid after a meal and sustain that effect, it might be desirable to take an antacid in combination with an over-the-counter acid reducer like famotidine or one of its equivalents," said Feldman, holder of the Southland Financial Corporation Distinguished Chair in Geriatrics.

However, Feldman stresses that antacids may also reduce the absorption of famotidine and other histamine₂-receptor antagonists, so the anti-ulcer and antacid combination may not work for everyone.

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