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On Drugs and Therapeutics

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IN BRIEF

Zegerid—Immediate-Release Omeprazole

The FDA has approved marketing of *Zegerid* powder for oral suspension (Santarus), an immediate-release formulation of the proton-pump inhibitor (PPI) omeprazole (*Prilosec*, and others). All other oral PPIs are delayed-release, enteric-coated formulations designed to prevent degradation of the drug by gastric acid. Each 20- or 40-mg packet of *Zegerid* contains 1680 mg of sodium bicarbonate, which protects the drug from gastric acid degradation. A dose of *Zegerid* contains 460 mg of sodium, which may be excessive for some patients. *Zegerid* is the first oral PPI to be approved by the FDA for reduction of risk of upper GI bleeding in critically ill patients. The drug may be useful for patients who are unable to swallow and have nasogastric (NG) tubes in place. *Zegerid* costs \$70.00 for 14 days' treatment, compared to less than \$10 for 14 tablets of *Prilosec* OTC.

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