

Stroke: Taking Medicines



Your healthcare provider has given you medicines to reduce the risk of a stroke. For them to be most effective, take them as prescribed. This sheet explains why and how to take your medicines.

How your medicines help you

- They make you feel better so you can do more things you enjoy.
- They keep your blood from clotting, which helps to prevent stroke.

Types of medicines

Many types of medicines can help prevent stroke. You may be prescribed 1 or more of these:

- Blood-thinner (anticoagulant) medicines help prevent blood clots from forming. If you take a blood thinner, you may need regular blood tests.
- Antiplatelets such as aspirin or clopidogrel are prescribed for many people who have had a stroke. They make blood clots less likely to form. Aspirin is available over the counter.
- Blood pressure medicines help lower high blood pressure. You may need to take more than 1 blood pressure medicine.
- Cholesterol-lowering medicines make plaque less likely to build up in your artery walls, which can decrease the risk for stroke.
- Heart medicines can treat certain heart problems that increase your risk for stroke.
- Diabetes medicines adjust blood sugar levels. This can prevent problems that lead to stroke.

Know which medicines you take

To help keep my blood from clotting,

I take: _____

To keep my blood pressure lower so it's easier for my heart to pump,

I take: _____

Tips for taking medicines

Below are tips for taking medicine. Keep in mind that most medicines need to be taken every day. This means even when you feel fine. Ask your provider if you need to stay away from certain foods or alcohol. Also tell your provider if you have problems affording medicine.

- Have a routine. Take medicine at the same time each day. Use reminders to help stay on track. Some people find using a pill box to organize medicines helpful for this.
- Take all your medicines. Some work best when used with others. Don't take 1 type and skip another.
- Plan ahead. Refill prescriptions before they run out. Be sure to take medicines along if you travel.

- Never change your dosage or stop taking medicine on your own. And if you miss a pill, don't take 2 the next time.
- Tell your provider if any medicines cause side effects. Your provider may change your dose or prescribe a new medicine.
- Carry a list of your medicines. Bring the list to appointments with your providers.



For family and friends

Medicines can play a key role in preventing stroke. This is especially true for people who have already had a stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA). To provide support:

- Make sure your loved one knows how the medicines work and when to take them. Check often to make sure they're taken as directed.
- Know if any medicine reacts with certain foods or alcohol.
- Watch for side effects. Call the provider if any medicine causes excess bruising, nosebleeds, dizziness, or blurred vision.

When to call your healthcare provider

Contact your provider right away if you:

- Have side effects, such as dizziness, nausea, muscle cramps, headache, coughing, swelling, or a skin rash.
- Are gaining weight.
- Miss a dose of any of your medicines for a prolonged length of time.

© 2000-2027 The StayWell Company, LLC. All rights reserved. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your healthcare professional's instructions
This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your Healthcare professional's instructions. Copyright Krames LLC.