

Common Heart Medicines



Many different medicines can help treat heart disease. Learn what type of medicine you're taking, what it treats, and how to take it safely. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you have questions about why you need a medicine or how it works. Medicines are prescribed in just the right doses for your heart condition. They work only if you take them exactly as directed. So your healthcare provider can prescribe the best medicine for you, but it's up to you to take them correctly.



Keep a list

Keep a list of all your medicines. Include your dosage and the time or times you take them. Update your list if any changes to your medicine are made. And share this list with any new healthcare provider you visit.

Common types of medicine

- ACE (angiotensin converting enzyme) inhibitors treat high blood pressure and heart failure.
- ARBs (angiotensin-receptor blockers) treat high blood pressure and heart failure. They may be used if you can't take an ACE inhibitor.
- Antiarrhythmics help slow and regulate a fast or irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia).
- Anticoagulants help reduce the risk that a blood clot will form and block the artery (thrombosis).
- Antihypertensives help treat high blood pressure (hypertension).
- Aspirin (taken regularly in the right dosage) helps reduce blood clots.

- Beta-blockers and calcium channel blockers help treat high blood pressure. They may also help prevent chest pain (angina) and regulate an arrhythmia. Beta-blockers also slow heart rate.
- Digitalis and digoxin help treat heart failure and may help an irregular heartbeat.
- Diuretics help treat high blood pressure, fluid balance, and heart failure. They are sometimes called water pills because they help your body get rid of extra water through urine.
- Lipid-lowering medicines such as statin, help control your cholesterol and triglyceride levels.
- Nitrates help prevent and treat angina.
- Vasodilators help blood flow more easily through the arteries. Calcium channel blockers and nitrates are vasodilators.

Tip

Take heart medicines at the same time every day. This will keep the amount of medicine in your bloodstream at a steady level. Talk with your healthcare provider to see if you need to measure your blood pressure and heart rate before taking your medicine. Also talk with your provider if you have any questions about your medicines or develop any side effects.

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