

All about Blood Pressure Medication

Have you tried changing your lifestyle to help your blood pressure only to find it isn't helping very much? Sometimes lifestyle changes alone aren't as effective as when combined with blood pressure medication.

There are many different kinds of blood pressure medications out there today. Usually two different medications are used rather than one alone. Here are some of the main blood pressure medications:

- **Alpha-Blockers:** This medicine reduces nerve impulses to your blood vessels allowing easier flowing of the blood making your blood pressure decrease.
- **Alpha-Beta-Blockers:** These work just like the alpha-blockers but also slow your heart beat. This means less blood pumps through your vessels making your blood pressure decrease.
- **Nervous System Inhibitors:** This medication relaxes your blood vessels by controlling the nerve impulses making your vessels wider and decreasing blood pressure.
- **Beta-Blockers:** These reduce your nerve impulses to your heart and blood vessels, making your heart beat decrease while dropping your blood pressure.
- **Diuretics:** These are also known as 'water pills,' a very common medication. These diuretics work in your kidney, flushing out all excess sodium along with water from your body.
- **Vasodilators:** These open your blood vessels directly by relaxing the muscle in your vessel walls which then causes your blood pressure to decrease.
- **ACE Inhibitors:** ACE stands for 'Angiotensin converting enzyme.' These inhibitors prevent a hormone called angiotensin II from forming, which will usually cause your blood vessels to narrow. They help the vessels relax which makes your blood pressure decrease.
- **Angiotensin Antagonists:** These block your blood vessels from angiotensin II. When blocked these vessels can widen letting your blood pressure decrease.
- **Calcium Channel Blockers:** These keep any calcium from entering your heart's muscle cells and your blood vessels causing your blood pressure to decrease.

An alternate to taking any medication if possible is watching a few lifestyle

habits. For instance a healthy diet can help control your blood pressure. Substitute salt for other seasonings and add lots of fresh fruits and vegetables to your diet.

Get at least thirty minutes of physical activity or exercise a day. That doesn't mean you have to exercise thirty minutes all at once. Ten minutes here and there is just as effective.

Try to keep your stress level at a minimum. High stress can increase your blood pressure so find something that relaxes you and helps you de-stress. Do this whenever you find yourself stressed out beyond your means.

Try to cut back on tobacco use and alcohol consumption. Quitting altogether is more beneficial but isn't always easy. Remember there are many resources and products available to help you quit either of these habits.

Sometimes these lifestyle changes will not work alone. Your doctor might prescribe you a blood pressure medication if not two. Just talk with your doctor to find out what would be better for you and your blood pressure. Ask any and all questions and if you are taking other medications tell your doctor. Certain medications including oral contraceptives and cold medicines can increase your blood pressure.