

Medicines for heart failure



Your heart medicines — An important part of your treatment plan

Medicines can help relieve the symptoms of heart failure. In heart failure, the heart cannot pump blood through the body as well as it should. Fluid can build up in the body. That can make it hard to breathe and make your heart work harder. Also, your feet and legs may become swollen.

Learn about medicines for heart failure

Learning about your medicines can help you manage your health. The chart below lists some types of medicines used to help treat heart failure. Often, 2 or more types of medicines are used together. Ask your doctor if you are taking any of these medicines. Check off the ones that you are taking and write in the name.

Type of medicine	What the medicine does
<input type="checkbox"/> ACE inhibitor (angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor) <i>My medicine:</i> _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes blood vessels to relax, which helps reduce strain on the heart • Reduces the symptoms of heart failure
<input type="checkbox"/> ARB (angiotensin II receptor blocker) <i>My medicine:</i> _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes blood vessels to relax, which helps reduce strain on the heart
<input type="checkbox"/> Beta-blocker <i>My medicine:</i> _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps keep the heart from beating too quickly • Helps keep the heartbeat regular • Helps slow down the rate at which heart failure gets worse
<input type="checkbox"/> Diuretic (also called a <i>water pill</i>) <i>My medicine:</i> _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps the body get rid of extra fluids to reduce swelling • Helps relieve the heart's workload • Helps make breathing easier
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive inotrope <i>My medicine:</i> _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes the heart beat stronger and pump better • Helps relieve symptoms of heart failure

Ask your doctor about your medicines

Take your medicines as directed. This can help manage your heart failure. Do not start or stop taking medicine without talking with your doctor first.

Your heart failure medicines: *What you need to know*



Your heart failure medicines help your heart in many ways

Medicines are a very important part of your heart failure treatment. This guide can help you learn more. It is *not* meant to replace the advice of your doctor. If you have questions or concerns about your medicines or how they make you feel, always talk with your doctor about them.

Keep taking your medicines even when you are feeling better. If you need to stop a medicine, always talk with your doctor first. Many heart failure medicines should not be stopped all at once. Your doctor can work with you to reduce your dose slowly.

Facts about heart failure medicines

Each one works in a different way

You may take one or more medicines every day. Your doctor may prescribe medicine to:

- Help your heart work better
- Help you breathe more easily
- Help you get rid of extra fluid
- Help you feel better
- Help you stay out of the hospital
- Help you live longer

How the medicines may make you feel

Some medicines for heart failure may affect the way you feel. At each doctor visit, be sure to let your doctor know how each medicine makes you feel. You and your doctor can decide what medicines are best for you and how to manage any side effects.

Talk with your doctor about your medicine

Ask these questions so you know how to take your medicine the right way.

1. What is the name of the medicine?
2. How will this medicine help me?
3. At what time of day should I take this medicine?
4. Should I take it with food or without?
5. What should I do if I miss a dose?
6. Are there any other medicines that I should not take with this medicine?

Taking Your Medicine The Right Way!

Taking your medicine the way your doctor tells you can help you stay healthy. Here are some tips to help you.

Be informed

Some things you should know about your medicine:

- The name of each medicine and why you should take it
- When and how much medicine you should take
- If you should take them with food or on an empty stomach
- Any side effects medicines may cause and what you should do about them
- If you should stay away from some foods, other medicines, or alcohol
- What to do if you miss a dose
- How to store the medicine
- How long your supply will last and how to get more

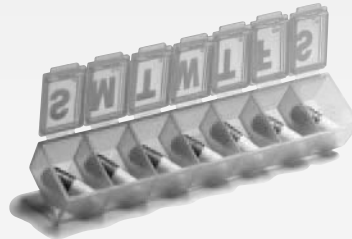
Make a list of your medicines

Keep track of how to take your medicines with a list like this one. Take it with you when you see your doctor.

Name of medicine	How much I take	When I take it	What I take it for	From this doctor
				On this date
<i>Medicine name</i>	<i>1 tablet</i>	<i>Before breakfast and dinner</i>	<i>Lower my blood sugar</i>	<i>Dr. Jones</i>
				<i>Jan. 1, 2006</i>

Tips to help you remember

- Ask family or friends to help
- Use a pill box organizer
- Set an alarm clock
- Take your pills at the same time you do something else, such as brush your teeth
- Make a chart to check off when you have taken your medicine



Tell your doctor if you take other over-the-counter medicines you get at a pharmacy or vitamin store. Always talk to your doctor before you stop taking any medicine or start taking a new one.

Keeping track of your weight



Weigh yourself every day

If you have heart failure, be sure to weigh yourself every day. Your weight goes up if there is extra fluid in your body. This could be a sign of heart failure. Extra fluid can make your heart work harder. It may also cause other problems, such as swelling and breathing trouble.

How to use your Weight Tracker

- Weigh yourself every morning at the same time. The best time is after you urinate (pee) but before you eat breakfast
- Use the same scale each time
- Place the scale on a hard surface, not on a soft rug
- Write down your weight and the date on the tracker
- Bring your Weight Tracker with you when you visit your doctor

Call your doctor if you gain or lose 2 or more pounds in 1 day, or 4 or more pounds in 1 week

Weight Tracker

Write down your weight and the date on the tracker every day.

	Sun	
1	6/25	← Date
	160	← Weight

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
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11							
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16							



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