

Medicines To Help You

# High Blood Pressure



Use this guide to help you talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse about your blood pressure medicines. The guide lists all of the FDA-approved products now available to treat this condition. You will also find some general information to help you use your medicines wisely.



## High blood pressure is a serious illness.

High blood pressure is often called a “silent killer” because many people have it but do not know it. Some people do not feel sick at first. **Over time, people who do not get treated for high blood pressure can get very sick or even die.**

High blood pressure can cause:

- Kidney Failure
- Stroke
- Blindness
- Heart Attacks

## There is good news.

There are life-saving medicines people can take every day to help control their high blood pressure. People who eat healthy foods, exercise, and take their medicines every day can control their blood pressure.

## Take your blood pressure medicines.

It is important to take your blood pressure medicines every day. **Take your medicines even when your blood pressure comes down... even when you do not feel bad.** Do not stop taking your medicine until your doctor says that it is OK.

Most people who take high blood pressure medicines do not get any side effects. Like all medicines, high blood pressure medicines can sometimes cause side effects. Some people have common problems like headaches, dizziness, or an upset stomach. These problems are small compared to what could happen if you do not take your medicine.

## Understanding your blood pressure - What do the numbers mean?

When you have your blood pressure taken, you are told 2 numbers like 120/80. Both numbers are important.

The first number is your pressure when your heart beats (**systolic pressure**).  
The second number is your pressure when your heart relaxes (**diastolic pressure**).

## High Blood Pressure Medicines

**Use this guide to help you talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse about your blood pressure medicines.** Ask your health care provider about the benefits and risks of taking your medicine. This guide only talks about some of the risks.

Tell your doctor about any problems you are having. Your doctor will help you find the medicine that is best for you.

Also, tell your doctor if you are pregnant, nursing, or planning to get pregnant. Ask your doctor to tell you about the risks of taking blood pressure medicines when you are pregnant.

The different kinds of blood pressure medicines are listed on the next few pages. The drugs are listed in groups. The brand names and generic names are given for the drugs in each group.

Find your drug. Then read some basic information about your kind of drug.

### Types of High Blood Pressure Medicines

- ACE Inhibitors
- Beta Blockers
- Calcium Channel Blockers
- Peripherally Acting Alpha-Adrenergic Blockers
- Angiotension II Antagonists
- Vasodilators
- Centrally-Acting Alpha Adrenergics
- Diuretics (sometimes called “water pills”)
- Renin Inhibitors
- Combination Medicines

## Angiotension-Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitors

| Brand Name | Generic Name |
|------------|--------------|
| Aceon      | Perindopril  |
| Accupril   | Quinapril    |
| Altace     | Ramipril     |
| Capoten    | Captopril    |
| Lotensin   | Benazepril   |
| Mavik      | Trandolapril |
| Monopril   | Fosinopril   |
| Prinivil   | Lisinopril   |
| Univasc    | Moexipril    |
| Vasotec    | Enalapril    |
| Vasotec IV | Enalaprilat  |
| Zestril    | Lisinopril   |

# ACE Inhibitors: What You Should Know

## Warnings

- Women who are pregnant or nursing should talk to their doctor before they start using these drugs.
- People who have kidney or liver problems, diabetes, or heart problems should talk to their doctor about the risks of using ACE drugs.
- People taking diuretics (water pills) should talk to their doctor about the risks of using ACE drugs.

## Common Side Effects

- Cough
- Dizziness
- Feeling Tired
- Headache
- Problems Sleeping
- Fast Heart Beat

## Warning Signs

**Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:**

- Chest Pain
- Problems Breathing or Swallowing
- Swelling in the Face, Eyes, Lips, Tongue, or Legs

**For up-to-date information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>**

## Beta Blockers

| Brand Name | Generic Name |
|------------|--------------|
| Bystolic   | Nebivolol    |
|            | Timolol      |
| Coreg      | Carvedilol   |
| Corgard    | Nadolol      |
| Inderal    | Propranolol  |
| Inderal LA | Propranolol  |
| Kerlone    | Betaxolol    |
| Levatol    | Penbutolol   |
| Lopressor  | Metoprolol   |
| Sectral    | Acebutolol   |
| Tenormin   | Atenolol     |
| Toprol XL  | Metoprolol   |
| Trandate   | Labetalol    |
| Visken     | Pindolol     |
| Zebeta     | Bisoprolol   |

## Beta-Blockers: What You Should Know

### Warnings

- Do not use these drugs if you have slow heart rate, heart block, or shock.
- Women who are pregnant or nursing should talk to their doctor before they start using these drugs.
- The elderly and people who have kidney or liver problems, asthma, diabetes, or overactive thyroid should talk to their doctor about the specific risks of using any of these Beta-Blockers.

### Common Side Effects

- Feeling Tired
- Upset Stomach
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Constipation/Diarrhea
- Feeling Lightheaded

### Warning Signs

**Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:**

- Chest Pain
- Problems Breathing
- Slow or Irregular Heartbeat
- Swelling in the Hands, Feet, or Legs

**For up-to-date information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>**

## Calcium Channel Blockers

| Brand Name  | Generic Name |
|-------------|--------------|
| Norvasc     | Amlodipine   |
| Cleviprex   | Clevidipine  |
| Cardizem    | Diltiazem    |
| Dilacor XR  | Diltiazem    |
| Tiazac      | Diltiazem    |
| Plendil     | Felodipine   |
| DynaCirc CR | Isradipine   |
| Cardene     | Nicardipine  |
| Adalat CC   | Nifedipine   |
| Procardia   | Nifedipine   |
| Nimotop     | Nimodipine   |
| Sular       | Nisoldipine  |
| Calan       | Verapamil    |
| Covera HS   | Verapamil    |
| Isoptin SR  | Verapamil    |
| Verelan     | Verapamil    |

# Calcium Channel Blockers: What You Should Know

## Warnings

- Do not use Calcium Channel Blockers if you have a heart condition or if you are taking nitrates, quinidine, or fentanyl.
- People who have liver or kidney problems should talk to their doctor about the specific risks of using any Calcium Channel Blocker.
- Women who are pregnant or nursing should talk to their doctor before they start using these drugs.

## Common Side Effects

- Feeling Drowsy
- Headache
- Upset Stomach
- Ankle Swelling
- Feeling Flushed (Warm)

## Warning Signs

**Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:**

- Chest Pain
- Serious Rashes
- Swelling of the Face, Eyes, Lips, Tongue, Arms, or Legs
- Fainting
- Irregular Heartbeat

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## Peripherally Acting Alpha-Adrenergic Blockers

| Brand Name  | Generic Name     |
|-------------|------------------|
| Cardura     | Doxazosin        |
| Dibenzyline | Phenoxybenzamine |
| Minipress   | Prazosin         |
| Hytrin      | Terazosin        |

### What You Should Know

#### Warnings

- The elderly and people who have liver problems should talk to their doctor about the risks of using these drugs.

#### Common Side Effects

- Dizziness
- Feeling Tired
- Feeling Lightheaded
- Vision Problems
- Swelling of the Hands, Feet, Ankles, or Legs
- Decreased Sexual Ability

#### Warning Signs

##### Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:

- Chest Pain
- Irregular Heartbeat
- Painful Erection in Men

**For up-to-date information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>**

## Vasodilators

| Brand Name | Generic Name |
|------------|--------------|
|            | Hydralazine  |
| Loniten    | Minoxidil    |

### Vasodilators: What You Should Know

#### Warnings

- Do not use these drugs if you are also taking bisulfates.
- Women who are pregnant or nursing should talk to their doctor before they start using these drugs.
- People who have diabetes, heart disease, or uremia (build up of waste in your blood) should talk to their doctor about the risks of using any of these drugs.
- People taking diuretics (water pills), insulin, phenytoin, corticosteroids, estrogen, warfarin, or progesterone should talk to their doctor about the risks of using any of these drugs.

#### Common Side Effects

- Headache
- Upset Stomach
- Dizziness
- Growth in Body Hair

#### Warning Signs

**Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:**

- Fever
- Fast Heartbeat
- Fainting
- Chest Pain
- Problems Breathing
- Sudden Weight Gain

**For up-to-date information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>**

## Angiotension II Antagonists

| Brand Name | Generic Name |
|------------|--------------|
| Atacand    | Candesartan  |
| Avapro     | Irbesartan   |
| Benicar    | Olmesartan   |
| Cozaar     | Losartan     |
| Diovan     | Valsartan    |
| Micardis   | Telmisartan  |
| Teveten    | Eprosartan   |

# Angiotensin II Antagonists: What You Should Know

## Warnings

- Do not use these drugs if you are pregnant or nursing.
- People who have kidney disease, liver disease, low blood volume, or low salt in their blood should talk to their doctor about the risks of taking these drugs.
- People taking diuretics (water pills) should talk to their doctor about the risks of taking these drugs.

## Common Side Effects

- Sore Throat
- Sinus Problems
- Heartburn
- Dizziness
- Diarrhea
- Back Pain

## Warning Signs

**Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:**

- Problems Breathing
- Fainting
- Swelling of the Face, Throat, Lips, Eyes, Hands, Feet, Ankles, or Legs

**For up-to-date information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
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## Centrally-Acting Alpha Adrenergics

| Brand Name | Generic Name |
|------------|--------------|
| Catapres   | Clonidine    |
| Tenex      | Guanfacine   |

### Centrally-Acting Alpha Adrenergics: What You Should Know

#### Warnings

- Women who are pregnant or nursing should talk to their doctor before they start using these drugs.
- People with heart disease, recent heart attack, or kidney disease should talk to their doctor before using these drugs.
- Drinking alcohol may make side effects worse.

#### Common Side Effects

- Dizziness
- Dry Mouth
- Upset Stomach
- Feeling Drowsy or Tired

#### Warning Signs

**Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:**

- Fainting
- Slow or Irregular Heartbeat
- Fever
- Swollen Ankles or Feet

**For up-to-date information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>**

## Renin Inhibitors

| Brand Name | Generic Name |
|------------|--------------|
| Tekturna   | Aliskiren    |

### Renin Inhibitors: What You Should Know

#### Warnings

- Women who are pregnant, or planning to become pregnant, should talk to their doctor before using this drug.
- People with kidney problems should talk to their doctor before using this drug.
- Tell your doctor if you are taking water pills (diuretics), high blood pressure medicines, heart medicines, or medicines to treat a fungus.

#### Common Side Effects

- Diarrhea

#### Warning Signs

##### Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:

- Low Blood Pressure
- Swelling of the Face, Throat, Lips, Eyes or Tongue

For up-to-date information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>

## Combination Medicines

| Brand Name | Generic Name                      |
|------------|-----------------------------------|
| Diovan HCT | Valsartan and Hydrochlorothiazide |
| Exforge    | Amlodipine and Valsartan          |
| Hyzaar     | Hydrochlorothiazide and Losartan  |
| Lexxel     | Enalapril and Felodipine          |
| Lotrel     | Benazepril and Amlodipine         |
| Tarka      | Verapamil and Trandolapril        |

### Combination Medicines: What You Should Know

- These drugs are made up of 2 different kinds of blood pressure drugs.
- Look for the **generic** names of these drugs on one of the other lists in this guide.

### Warnings and Side Effects

- The warnings and side effects for these drugs will be the same as those listed earlier for both generic drugs.

For up-to-date information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>

## Other Combination Medicines

| Brand Name | Generic Name                |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| Caduet     | Amlodipine and Atorvastatin |

**Caduet is used to treat people who have both high blood pressure and high cholesterol.**

### Warnings

- Do not take Caduet if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.
- Do not take Caduet if you are breastfeeding.
- Do not take Caduet if you have liver problems.

### Common Side Effects

- Swelling of the Legs or Ankles (edema)
- Muscle or Joint Pain
- Headache
- Diarrhea or Constipation
- Feeling Dizzy
- Feeling Tired or Sleepy
- Gas
- Rash
- Nausea
- Stomach Pain
- Fast or Irregular Heartbeat
- Face feels Hot or Warm (flushing)

### Warning Signs

**Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:**

- Muscle Problems like Weakness, Tenderness, or Pain that happens without a good reason (like exercise or injury)
- Brown or Dark-colored Urine
- Skin or Eyes look Yellow (jaundice)
- Feel More Tired than Usual

**For more information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>**

## Diuretics (sometimes called “water pills”)

| Brand Name                              | Generic Name               |
|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Aldactazide<br/>Aldactone</b>        | <b>Spirolactone</b>        |
| <b>Demadex</b>                          | <b>Torse mide</b>          |
| <b>Diuril</b>                           | <b>Chlorothiazide</b>      |
| <b>Enduron</b>                          | <b>Methyclothiazide</b>    |
| <b>Esidrix<br/>Microzide<br/>Oretic</b> | <b>Hydrochlorothiazide</b> |
| <b>Lasix</b>                            | <b>Furosemide</b>          |
| <b>Lozol</b>                            | <b>Indapamide</b>          |
| <b>Saluron</b>                          | <b>Hydroflumethiazide</b>  |
| <b>Thalitone</b>                        | <b>Chlorthalidone</b>      |
| <b>Zaroxolyn</b>                        | <b>Metolazone</b>          |

## Diuretics: What You Should Know

### Warnings

- Tell your doctor if you are breastfeeding. These drugs may pass into your breast milk.
- Do not use these drugs if you have problems making urine.
- People with kidney or liver problems, pregnant women, and the elderly should talk to their doctor about the risks of using diuretics.

### Common Side Effects

- Dizziness
- Frequent Urination
- Headache
- Feeling Thirsty
- Muscle Cramps
- Upset Stomach

### Warning Signs

**Call your doctor if you have any of these signs:**

- Severe Rash
- Problems Breathing or Swallowing
- Hyperuricemia (Gout)

**For up-to-date information about the risks and side effects for each drug  
Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/>**

## Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- What drugs am I taking?

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- What are the side effects?

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- What other prescription drugs should I avoid while taking my medicines?

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- What foods, herbs, or over-the-counter medicines should I avoid?

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- When should I take each drug? How many times a day do I take each drug?

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- Can I take my medicines if I am pregnant or nursing?

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## To Learn More:

### **FDA Heart Health Online**

<http://www.fda.gov/hearthealth/treatments/medications.html>

### **Federal Relay Service**

Phone: 1-800-877-8339

### **National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Health Information Center**

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/index.htm#hbp>

Phone: 301-592-8573

TTY/TDD: 240-629-3255

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This guide should not be used in place of talking to your doctor or reading the label on your medicine bottle. The drug and risk information in this guide may change. Check <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/> for the latest facts on each product listed in this guide.