

Tips for Taking Medicine for High Blood Pressure

If you have high blood pressure, making lifestyle changes may not be enough to lower your blood pressure. You may need to take medicine as well.

Follow these tips to stay informed and organized about taking your medicines.

1. Take your medicine the way your doctor tells you.
2. Tell the doctor the names of all other medicines, home remedies, herbs, or supplements you take. Bring everything with you when you have a doctor's appointment.
3. Tell the doctor right away if the medicine makes you feel strange or sick. Ask the doctor about changing the dosage or switching to another type of medicine.
4. Refill your prescription before you run out of medicine.
5. Check and record your blood pressure often to see if the medicine is working for you.
6. Don't stop taking your medicine if your blood pressure is normal. That means the medicine is working.
7. Do not share medicines with friends or family.
8. If you cannot afford your medicine, let your doctor know. There may be programs to help you buy your medicine.
9. Use notes and other reminders to take your medicine. Ask your family to help you with reminder phone calls or text messages.



Questions For Your Doctor

- What are the names of my medicines? _____
- How much do I take? _____
- When should I take them? _____
- What can I eat or drink with my medicines? _____
- Can I take other medicines or vitamins at the same time? _____
- If problems occur, who should I call? _____

Medicines for High Blood Pressure

There are many medicines available to control your high blood pressure. Many people need to take more than one kind of blood pressure medicine. Use this tip sheet to learn about common types. Also talk to your doctor to learn more about the medicines you take and your high blood pressure treatment plan.

Type of Medicine	How It Works	What You Need to Know About This Medicine*
Diuretics (also called water pills)	Helps your body get rid of extra water and sodium. This allows your blood vessels to widen which lowers your blood pressure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may need to take potassium pills when you take this medicine. Your doctor may have you take this medicine by itself or in combination with another blood pressure medicine.
Beta blockers	Makes the heart beat slower and with less force. This helps your blood pressure to go down.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you plan to stop taking it, do not do so all at once. Doing so can raise your blood pressure and increase your chance of a heart attack. Avoid if you have asthma or other problems with your lungs.
ACE** inhibitors and ARBs***	Blocks a hormone in the blood that causes blood vessels to tighten.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your doctor will check your kidneys before prescribing this.
Calcium channel blockers	Blocks calcium from going into your cells. This helps to keep your blood vessels from tightening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You may not be able to take allergy pills while you are on this medicine. Check with your doctor.

* Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or nursing.

**ACE (angiotensin–converter enzyme)

***ARBs (angiotensin–receptor blockers)

Some Facts About Blood Pressure Medicine

- Some medicines can cause side effects or reactions. If this happens, talk to your doctor about ways to control them or not have as many of them.
- Eating more vegetables and fruits, cutting back on salt and sodium, losing weight, and being physically active may reduce your medication dosage.



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