

# Heart Failure Medications: Beta Blockers

You have been prescribed a Beta Blocker to help manage your heart failure symptoms.

To help you understand what Beta Blockers do, let's take a look at how the heart normally works.

The heart is a muscle that pumps oxygen and nutrient-rich blood through your body.

Your body relies on a supply of oxygen-rich blood to help you carry out normal day-to-day activities and keep you healthy.

However, when you have heart failure, your weakened heart can't pump enough blood to meet your body's needs.

To make up for the weakness, your heart starts to pump harder. This helps at first, but over time the extra work causes damaging changes in your heart. The walls become thicker and more muscular and the heart may expand. Gradually, your heart can't pump blood as efficiently as it used to.

Taking your Beta Blocker can help.

Beta Blockers work by blocking hormones that stimulate your heart. As a result, your heart can beat more slowly so it's not working as hard.

Beta Blockers also cause your blood vessels to relax and get wider. This lowers your blood pressure and makes your heart's job easier.

There are several types of Beta Blockers available.

This list includes generic and brand names, but it's important to know that new medications are introduced regularly. Talk to your healthcare provider about which one is right for you.

As with any medication there may be some side effects.

Some common side effects of Beta Blockers include feeling tired, upset stomach, headache, dizziness, constipation or diarrhea, or feeling lightheaded.

Call your doctor right away if you experience more serious side effects like chest pain, problems breathing, slow or irregular heartbeat, or swelling in the hands, feet or legs.

If you experience any of these or other side effects, contact your healthcare provider. You may need to have your prescription changed.

If you have difficulty breathing, chest pain, irregular heartbeat, can't swallow, or are lightheaded, immediately call 911 or your emergency response number so an ambulance can be sent.

Taking your Beta Blocker as prescribed will help reduce your symptoms so you can feel better and manage your heart failure for the long-term.