

Taking a Beta-Blocker

A beta-blocker decreases your heart's workload and helps your heart beat more regularly. It can also help increase your heart's pumping ability. This can reduce chest pain. It may also lower your blood pressure and heart rate. This medicine is sometimes used to treat other health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart failure, coronary artery disease, heart attack (myocardial infarction), and irregular heart rhythms (cardiac arrhythmias). Beta-blockers also are sometimes used for health issues that aren't related to the heart. These include anxiety, migraine headaches, glaucoma, tremor, and hyperthyroidism.



The name of my beta-blocker is: _____

I'm taking it for: _____

Medicine tips

- Read the fact sheet that comes with your medicine. Ask for a sheet if you don't get one.
- Take your beta-blocker exactly as directed. Follow the directions on the label.
- Take your medicine at the same time or times every day.
- If you take a long-acting tablet or capsule, swallow it whole. Don't chew it, crush it, or break it open unless you are told it's okay to do so.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember—unless it's almost time for your next dose. If so, skip the missed dose. Don't take a double dose.

For your safety

- Talk to your health care providers (including your pharmacist) before taking any other prescription or over-the-counter medicines, like pain relievers, antacids, cold medicines, allergy medicines, and laxatives. This also includes dietary and vitamin supplements and herbal remedies.

- Don't stop taking your beta-blocker unless your provider tells you to. Doing so can make your condition worse. When it's time to stop, follow your provider's instructions.
- Don't drive or operate heavy machinery unless you are sure your beta-blocker doesn't make you sleepy or dizzy.
- To prevent dizziness, get up slowly after sitting or lying down.

Possible side effects

Along with their intended effects, medicine can have unwanted side effects. These effects may go away as your body adjusts to the medicine. Possible side effects of beta-blockers include:

- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded.
- Tiredness, drowsiness, or weakness.
- Sexual and erectile dysfunction.
- Trouble sleeping, insomnia, sleep changes, vivid dreams, or nightmares.
- Mood changes or depression.
- Fainting.
- Slow heartbeat.
- Low blood pressure.
- Weight gain.
- Nausea, and constipation.

Talk to your health care provider if you have side effects that bother you or don't go away.

When to get medical advice

Contact your health care provider or seek medical care right away if you have:

- Swelling in your lower legs or feet that gets worse.
- Yellowing skin or eyes.
- Numbness or tingling.
- A skin rash or itching.

Call 911

Call 911 if you have:

- Wheezing or trouble breathing.
- Chest pain, or a slow or irregular heartbeat.

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- Mental confusion or blurred vision.
 - Dizziness or you faint.