



Medications for Heart Failure



Overview

When you have heart failure, medications are an important part of your care plan. Let's learn about some of the drugs we commonly use, and how they help you.

Lowering blood pressure

First, we may need to lower your blood pressure. We can do this with a "beta blocker." These drugs block the effects of the natural hormone "epinephrine." This helps lower your heart rate, lessening the workload on your heart.

ACE inhibitors and angiotensin receptor blockers

We can also lower blood pressure with a class of drugs known as "ACE inhibitors." They block an enzyme so your blood vessels relax and widen. Or, we give you "angiotensin receptor blockers." These are similar to ACE inhibitors. But they work better for some people.

Getting rid of extra fluid

With heart failure, extra fluid can build up in your body. To help your body get rid of this fluid, we may give you a diuretic. We also call these "water pills." There are several types. We may also give you a drug called an "aldosterone antagonist." It blocks a hormone to help your body get rid of fluid.

Other drugs

There are several other types of drugs we use to improve your heart's function. Some can be used alone. Some are combined because they work better together than when used alone.

Conclusion

It's important to follow the instructions for all of your medications. Talk to your doctor about possible interactions and side effects. If you have questions, get answers. By following your care plan, you can stay safe.