

BETA BLOCKERS



■ WHAT ARE BETA BLOCKERS?

Beta blockers get their name because they "block" the effects of substances like adrenaline on your body's "beta receptors". Some common generic and brands names of beta blockers include:

- Atenolol (Tenormin)
- Carvedilol (Coreg)
- Metoprolol succinate (Toprol XL)
- Propranolol (Inderal)

■ WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR?

Beta blockers are used to:

- treat high blood pressure;
- slow fast arrhythmias (abnormal heartbeats or heart rhythms);
- prevent long-term damage after a heart attack.

They are also used to treat heart failure and related conditions such as a low ejection fraction (EF). In some cases, beta blockers may be used to treat migraines, glaucoma, and other medical conditions.

■ HOW DO THEY WORK?

These medications block activity of your sympathetic nervous system, which responds to stress. When your system responds, your heart beats faster and with more force. Your blood pressure also goes up.

Beta blockers slow your heart rate and keep your blood vessels from narrowing. These two actions can result in lower heart rate; lower blood pressure; less angina (chest pain related to the heart); and fewer arrhythmias (abnormal heartbeats, or heart rhythms).