



TIPS FOR TAKING HEART MEDICATIONS



If you have a heart or vascular condition, you might want to know more about some of the medications you take. The information in this section describes some medications commonly prescribed for heart and vascular conditions and tips on taking these medications. Always be sure to tell your cardiologist about all medications, supplements, and over-the-counter medications you may be taking. This can help avoid harmful interactions between medications. Your doctor wants to be sure that you are getting the most benefit from the medications you are taking. Each time you get a new medication you may want to discuss with your doctor or nurse:

- The reason the medication was prescribed - its expected benefits and possible side effects.
- How and when to take the medication.
- How long you may be expected to be on that medication.

In some cases, your heart needs several months to adjust to new medications. So you may not notice any improvement right away. It may also take time for your doctor to determine the most beneficial dosage amount. Never stop taking a prescription medication without talking to your doctor first. Blood tests are sometimes necessary for people who take heart medications. The blood tests help your doctor determine the correct dosage for you and in some cases may also help to screen for any possible negative side effects from the medication. Be sure to talk to your doctor or nurse if you have:

- Questions about how your medications work.
- Unpleasant side effects.
- Trouble remembering to take your pills.
- Trouble paying for your medications.
- Other factors that prevent you from taking your needed medications.