

Blood Pressure Medicines

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What are some common medicines to treat high blood pressure?

There are 8 types of medicine used to treat high blood pressure. Your doctor will decide which type of medicine is right for you.

Diuretics (water pills) help your body get rid of extra sodium (salt) and water so your blood vessels don't have to hold so much fluid. Some examples of diuretics include chlorthalidone (brand name: Thalitone), furosemide (brand name: Lasix), hydrochlorothiazide (brand name: Esidrix) and indapamide (brand name: Lozol). Your doctor may also prescribe a combination of diuretics, such as hydrochlorothiazide combined with triamterene (brand names: Dyazide, Maxzide).

Beta-blockers make the heart beat slower so that blood passes through your blood vessels with less force. Some examples of beta-blockers include acebutolol (brand name: Sectral), atenolol (brand name: Tenormin), carvedilol (brand name: Coreg), metoprolol (brand names: Lopressor, Toprol XL), nadolol (brand name: Corgard), propranolol (brand name: Inderal) and timolol (brand name: Blocadren).

Angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (also called ACE inhibitors) keep your body from making angiotensin II, a hormone that causes blood vessels to narrow. Some examples of ACE inhibitors include benazepril (brand name: Lotensin), enalapril (brand name: Vasotec), lisinopril (brand names: Prinivil, Zestril), quinapril (brand name: Accupril), ramipril (brand name: Altace) andtrandolapril (brand name: Mavik).

Angiotensin II receptor blockers (also called ARBs) protect your blood vessels from the effects of angiotensin II, a hormone that causes blood vessels to narrow. Some examples of ARBs include candesartan (brand name: Atacand), irbesartan (brand name: Avapro), losartan (brand name: Cozaar), olmesartan (brand name: Benicar), telmisartan (brand name: Micardis) and valsartan (brand name: Diovan).

Calcium channel blockers (also called CCBs) help keep your blood vessels from constricting (becoming narrow) by blocking calcium from entering your cells. Some examples of CCBs include amlodipine (brand name: Norvasc), diltiazem (brand names: Cardizem, Cartia, Dilacor, Tiazac), felodipine (brand name: Plendil), nicardipine (brand name: Cardene), nifedipine (brand names: Adalat, Procardia) and verapamil (some brand names: Calan, Covera, Isoptin, Verelan).

Alpha-blockers help relax your blood vessels by reducing nerve impulses. This allows your blood to pass through more easily. Some examples of alpha-blockers include doxazosin (brand name: Cardura), prazosin (brand name: Minipress) and terazosin (brand name: Hytrin).

Centrally acting drugs affect your brain and central nervous system to reduce the nerve impulses that can cause your blood vessels to narrow. Some examples of centrally acting drugs include clonidine (brand name: Catapres) and methyldopa.

Direct vasodilators relax the muscles in the blood vessel walls. This causes the blood vessels to widen. Some examples of vasodilators include hydralazine (brand name: Apresoline) andminoxidil (brand name: Loniten).