

Heart Failure Medicines

Some heart failure medicines improve the way the heart pumps. Others help relieve symptoms. Common heart failure medicines are listed below. You may take 1 or more of these. With the help of your healthcare provider, write down the names of the medicines that you have been prescribed.

Types of Medicines	What They Do	Possible Side Effects	Notes
Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme (ACE) Inhibitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stops the body from making a substance called angiotensin, causing blood vessels to relax. This lowers blood pressure and decreases strain on the heart. The heart pumps better and blood flow is improved. 	Dizziness; dry cough; change in kidney function; too much potassium in the body; swelling of mouth, lips, or tongue	Dose will start low and increase slowly over time. Get medical help right away if mouth, lips, or tongue become swollen. You will have lab tests to monitor potassium levels and kidney function.
Angiotensin Receptor Blocker (ARB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blocks the effects of angiotensin, causing blood vessels to relax. This lowers blood pressure and decreases strain on the heart. The heart pumps better and blood flow is improved. May be prescribed instead of an ACE inhibitor. 	Dizziness; change in kidney function; too much potassium in the body; swelling of mouth, lips, or tongue (rare)	Dose will start low and increase slowly over time. Get medical help right away if mouth, lips, or tongue become swollen. You will have lab tests to monitor potassium levels and kidney function.
Angiotensin Receptor-Nepriylsin Inhibitor (ARNI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relaxes blood vessels, decreases strain on the heart, and helps the body retain less fluid. May be prescribed instead of an ACE inhibitor. May help reduce the risk for hospitalizations and death in certain people with heart failure. 	Dizziness; change in kidney function; too much potassium in the body; swelling of mouth, lips, or tongue (rare)	Get medical help right away if mouth, lips, or tongue become swollen. You will have lab tests to monitor potassium levels and kidney function.
Beta-Blocker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blocks the effects of hormones that make the heart pump too fast and with too much force. This slows the heart rate and lowers blood pressure. May strengthen the heart's pumping action over time. 	Dizziness; low heart rate; depression; tiredness; sexual dysfunction	Dose will start low and increase slowly over time. Don't stop taking this medicine suddenly. Call your healthcare provider if you have side effects.
Diuretic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps rid the body of excess water, which reduces swelling and may improve breathing. Less fluid to pump means the heart doesn't have to work as hard. Also called "water pills." 	Frequent urination; loss of potassium, magnesium, or sodium from body; kidney problems; low blood pressure (may make you dizzy); high blood sugar; gout; impotence; dehydration	Amount you take changes depending on how much fluid is stored in your body. A potassium supplement may be prescribed. Take one only if told to do so by your healthcare provider.
Aldosterone Antagonist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blocks the effect of aldosterone, a hormone that can make heart failure worse. Used to help control symptoms, keep heart failure from getting worse, and improve outcomes in certain people with advanced heart failure. 	Changes in kidney function; low blood pressure; breast swelling, tenderness, or enlargement; too much potassium in the body	Potassium levels need to be monitored while on this medicine. If levels are high, you may be told to avoid or limit high-potassium foods.
Digoxin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slows heart rate. Helps the heart pump more blood with each beat, so that more oxygen-rich blood travels to the body. 	Heart rate slows too much; yellow-tinted vision; loss of appetite; stomach pain; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea; heart rhythm problems; tiredness or weakness	Call your healthcare provider if you have side effects. Levels of this medicine may need to be checked.
Hydralazine and Nitrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lowers blood pressure and decreases how hard the heart has to work in certain people with heart failure. 2 separate medicines used together. 	Dizziness; fast heart rate; headache; lupus; swelling in the legs; nausea and vomiting; flushing	Call your healthcare provider if you have side effects.
Hyperpolarization-activated Cyclic Nucleotide (HCN) Channel Blocker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slows the heart rate so the heart doesn't have to work as hard. May help reduce the risk for hospitalizations and death in certain people with heart failure. 	Increased blood pressure; temporary changes in vision (such as increased brightness); heart rate slows too much	This medicine needs to be taken with food. Call your healthcare provider if you have side effects.

If You Have Side Effects

Some heart medicines can cause side effects. Ask your healthcare provider and pharmacist what you should expect from your medicines. They may know ways to prevent or reduce side effects. Also, be sure to find out when to call your healthcare provider for help managing serious side effects.

This information is not intended as a substitute for professional healthcare. Always follow your healthcare provider's instructions.