

Heart Failure: Medications to Help Your Heart

Your doctor will likely prescribe medications for heart failure and any underlying health problems you have. Most heart failure patients take one or more types of medication. Your healthcare provider will work to find the combination of medications that works best for you.



Bring all of your medications to appointments so you can discuss them with your healthcare provider.

Heart Failure Medications

Here are the most common heart failure medications:

- **ACE inhibitors** lower blood pressure and decrease strain on the heart. This makes it easier for the heart to pump. **Angiotensin receptor blockers** have similar effects. These are prescribed for some patients instead of ACE inhibitors.
- **Beta-blockers** help lower blood pressure and slow your heart rate. This lessens the work your heart has to do. Beta-blockers may improve the heart's pumping action over time.
- **Diuretics** (also called "water pills") help rid your body of excess water. This can help rid your body of edema (swelling). Having less fluid to pump means your heart doesn't have to work as hard. Some diuretics make your body lose a mineral called potassium. Your doctor will tell you if you need to take supplements or eat more foods high in potassium.
- **Digoxin** helps your heart pump with more strength. This helps your heart pump more blood with each beat. So, more oxygen-rich blood travels to the rest of the body.
- **Aldosterone antagonists** help alter hormones and decrease strain on the heart.
- **Hydralazine and nitrates** are two separate medications used together to treat heart failure. They may come in one "combination" pill. They lower blood pressure and decrease how hard the heart has to pump.

Medications for Related Conditions

Controlling other heart problems helps keep heart failure under control, too. Depending on other heart

problems you have, medications may be prescribed to:

- Lower blood pressure (antihypertensives).
- Lower cholesterol levels (statins).
- Prevent blood clots (anticoagulants or aspirin).
- Keep the heartbeat steady (antiarrhythmics).