

The Essentials of Cardiovascular Disease

Please do not substitute this information for advice you'd get from a doctor. This is not a complete collection of information, and it's not individualized specifically for you. Talk to your medical doctor or nurse practitioner. Have a naturopathic doctor in your circle of care. Get all the advice you can from the doctor sitting across from you, because understanding your specific cardiovascular issue is important.

These are Common Types of Cardiovascular Disease

- Coronary Artery Disease (Hardening of the arteries)
- Heart Attack (Myocardial Infarction, MI)
- Abnormal Heart Rhythm (arrhythmia)
- Heart Failure (Angina)
- Cardiomyopathy (Enlarged Heart, usually left ventricle)
- Aortic disease (Marfan syndrome) (Due to hardening of the arteries)
- Vascular disease (Stroke)
- Prinzmetal's Angina (Vasospastic angina)

These are Some Signs of a Heart Attack

- Chest, arms, neck, jaw, or back: pressure, tightness, pain, squeezing aching
- Nausea, indigestion, heartburn, abdominal pain
- Shortness of breath
- Cold sweat or sudden change in body temperature
- Fatigue
- Light headed, suddenly dizzy
- And...
- *DENIAL* Loved ones, you want to keep this in mind

These are Some Symptoms of Severely High Blood Pressure

- Severe headache
- Fatigue or Confusion
- Vision Problems
- Chest Pain
- Difficulty Breathing
- Irregular Heartbeat
- Blood in the urine
- Pounding in the chest, neck, ears

There are no Symptoms of Moderately Elevated Blood Pressure

Low Blood Pressure Can Occur, Particularly at Certain Times of Day, When We're taking Multiple Medications That Affect Blood Pressure

- Dizzy or light-headed
 - Nausea
 - Faint feelings, weakness, fatigue
 - Thirst, feeling dehydrated
 - Can't concentrate, fuzzy brain
 - Blurry vision, room tilting
 - Cold clammy pale skin, chilly
 - Rapid shallow breathing
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- Among Other Things, Those With High Blood Pressure Want to Watch Out For:
 - Licorice root
 - Caffeine (this includes green tea)
 - Ephedra, ephedrine (diet pills, some allergy medications)
 - Maka
 - Tribulus terrestris

The NSAID Group of Medications are Something You Should Be Aware Of
Some examples are Aspirin (ASA), Celebrex (celecoxib), Acetaminophen (Tylenol)*, Voltaren (the oral medication), Motrin, Advil (ibuprophen), Aleve , Naproxen (naprocsen)

These Have Significance With Regard To:

- Liver
- Kidneys
- Gastrointestinal bleeding
- Stomach ulcers
- Interactions with medications

ACE-Inhibitors

Some examples are Lotensin, Vasotec, Prinivil, Zestril, Aceon, Accupril, Altace, Mavik

- Most common Adverse effects: dry cough, headache, taste alteration, dizziness, rash, swelling (angioedema), low blood pressure, protein in the urine, kidney dysfunction, elevated potassium** (heart rhythm problems).
- Interactions you should be aware of: Potassium supplements, potassium sparing diuretics, low blood pressure with water pills
- When used with NSAIDS: more fluid retention, harder on the kidneys, makes the less effective for hypertension

Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers (ARBs)

Some examples are Edarbi, Atacand, Avapro, Cozaar, Benicar, Micardis, Diovan

- Most common adverse effects: high potassium**, swelling (angioedema, less frequent than with ACE-I), kidneys, headache, dizziness
- Doesn't produce dry cough like ACE-Inhibitors do.
- Interactions you should know about: increased potassium with ACE-Inhibitors and diuretics (water pills). NSAIDS decrease effect on blood pressure, fluid retention, kidneys.

Beta Blockers

Some examples Sectral, Tenormin, Zebeta, Lopressor, Toprol, Corgard, Bystolic, Inderal, InnoPran

- Don't stop taking this abruptly (rebound high blood pressure, worsening ischemia)
- Most common adverse effects: low blood pressure, sleep issues, dizziness, fatigue, appetite changes (less), nausea, raynaud's phenomenon, lethargy, headache, decreased exercise capacity, impotence, vivid dreams.
- Interactions you should know about: amiodarone, calcium channel blockers, other anti-arrhythmics, digoxin, some erectile dysfunction meds, anesthetics.

Calcium Channel Blockers

Some examples are Norvasc, Cardizem, Tiazac, Adalat, Afeditab, Procardia, Calan, Verelan

- Most common adverse effects: constipation, low blood pressure, flushing, swelling, headache, dizziness.
- Interactions you should know about: grapefruit

Loop diuretics

Some examples are Bumetadine, Bumex, Ethacrinic acid, Edecrin, Furosemide, Lasix, Torsemide, Demadex

- Most common adverse effects: dehydration, low potassium, low blood calcium, nausea, low blood pressure, magnesium depletion, body aches, appetite changes (less), monitor your blood sugar, watch for early signs of gout
- Interactions you should know about: NSAIDs may decrease effect

Thiazide Diuretics

Some examples are Diuril, Chlorthalidone, Hydrochlorothiazide, Microzide, Indapamide, Metolazone

- Watch out for gout: burning pain with red/purple swollen skin, usually on the feet or hands.
- Watch out for increases in blood sugar
- Watch out for dehydration: sunken in face, dry skin, skin on back of hands stays “pinched” when you pinch it.
- May cause weakness, muscle cramping, sexual dysfunction, photosensitivity (sunlight), fatigue, acute interstitial nephritis (inflammation in the kidneys), low potassium/sodium/magnesium (electrolyte disturbance), elevated calcium (fatigue)

Potassium Sparing Diuretics

Some examples are Amiloride, Eplerenone, Inspra, Spironolactone, Aldactone, Traimterene, Dyrenium

- Increases potassium.
- What to watch for: gynecomastia (enlarged breasts in men), muscle cramps, body aches, headaches, impotence (erectile dysfunction)
- Interactions you need to know about: potassium supplements.
- If you’re taking an NSAID regularly, make sure your MD knows about it.

Aldosterone agonists (spironolactones)

- Watch for: reversible gynecomastia (men), rash, nausea vomiting, diarrhea, confusion (elderly), irregular menses, breast tenderness, headache, impotence (erectile dysfunction).
- Interactions you need to know about: potassium supplements, increased potassium with NSAIDs

Blood thinners:

These are Thrombolytics, Anti-platelets, Low molecular weight heparin, Glycoprotein inhibitors, Anticoagulants, ASA (aspirin), Direct thrombin inhibitors

Some examples are Rivaroxaban, Xarelto, Dabigatran, Pradaxa, Apixaban, Eliquis, Heparin, Warfarin, Coumadin

This group of medications has many medication, herb, and nutritional interactions. If you've been prescribed one of these medications, make sure you know it well.

Cholesterol Meds:

These are HMG Co-A Reductase Inhibitors, Fibrates, Resins (Cholestyramine)

Some examples are Atorvastatin, Lipitor, Fluvastatin, Lescol, Lovastatin, Mevacor, Altoprev, Pravastatin, Pravachol, Rosuvastatin, Crestor, Simvastatin, Zocor, Pitavastatin, Livalo, Lipofen, Fenofibrate, Lipid, Gemfibrozil, TriCor, Lofibra, Trilipix, Fenoglide, Antara, Fibracor, Triglide

- Grapefruit seed extract decreases its effect (may also impair your ability to absorb other medications)
- Some of these deplete the body of CoEnzyme Q10

Alpha Agonists

- For high blood pressure and prostate disease. Tends not to be the first prescription for high blood pressure.
- Your doctor may increase the dose slowly.
- Common adverse effects: postural low blood pressure, headache, drowsiness, palpitations, nasal congestion.
- If you feel faint when you start taking this, let your doctor know.

CVD & Stress Management

- Stress hormones can contribute to high blood pressure.
- The fight - flight response produces stress hormones.
- Stress is a prolonged fight - flight response.
- There are many ways to manage the body's stress response. Lets talk about that.

Stress Management Is Different For Everybody

- The type of breathing techniques that are effective for people will differ.
- Movement techniques are something to think about and start asking questions about (tai chi, chi gong, yoga, dancing).
- Think of physical activity as a way to get the stress energy out of your nervous system. Consider that it's an outlet, and when built up nervous energy is expressed through movement, the cardiovascular system is less susceptible to the effects of stress.
- Fatigue during exercise may be normal, or it may not be. This is something you want to talk to your medical doctor or naturopath about.

Know enough to be able to ask the right questions. Keep learning.

-Dr. Angela ND