



Waitemata
District Health Board

Te Wai Awhina



Medicines for Coronary Artery Disease

Te awatea hou
A new dawn

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Information

To receive this information in Chinese, Korean or Samoan, contact North Shore or Waitakere hospitals at **(09) 486 8920** and ask for the Cardiology Service.

An interpreter can be arranged for clinic appointments if you need one.

For 24-hour health advice, contact Healthline at **0800 611 116** or visit www.healthline.co.nz

For further resources, visit Health Navigator at www.healthnavigator.org.nz

Any questions?

This booklet does not tell you everything about your medicines.

Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you do not understand something or want to know more about your medicines.

Glossary of terms

Confusion	Getting mixed up or muddled
Diarrhoea	Loose bowel motion
Dizzy	Light-headed
Herbal supplements	Natural remedies, vitamins or minerals
Nausea	Feeling as if you might vomit
Potassium	Natural chemical in your body and some foods
Side effect	An unintended effect from taking a medicine

What is coronary artery disease?

Coronary artery disease refers to the narrowing of arteries supplying the heart muscle, and is the underlying cause of angina and heart attack.

If you have had a heart attack, bypass surgery, angioplasty or have angina, you will need medicine which helps to:

- Lower the chance of you having another heart attack
- Prevent your heart condition from getting worse

Medicines for coronary artery disease

You need to be on several different types of medicine as each works in a different way. Using them together produces the best results.

The different medicines will:

- Help control your symptoms
- Lower your blood pressure and heart rate
- Lower your cholesterol
- Keep your blood thin

It is important that you:

- Take your medicines as your doctor tells you; be sure not to miss doses or you could feel unwell
- Don't stop taking your medicines without talking to your doctor, or you may be at risk of a heart attack
- Talk to your pharmacist or doctor before you take any other medicines



Blood thinning medicines

Aspirin

Aspirin thins your blood and reduces clotting. This lowers your chance of having a heart attack.

The dose (amount) of aspirin used to thin blood is much lower than what you would take for pain relief.

Different types of aspirin

Common name	Brand name(s)
Soluble aspirin	Solprin [®] , Disprin [®] , Cardiprin [®] , AsproClear [®]
Coated aspirin	Cartia [®] , Aspec 75 [®] , Heartcare Aspirin [®]

What are some of the side effects?

The dose of aspirin used is so small that most people don't get side effects from it. **Always take your aspirin with food.**

Tell your doctor if you have:

- Stomach soreness or pain
- Unusual bruising anywhere on your body

Phone your doctor straight away if aspirin causes you to:

- Get short of breath or wheeze
- Vomit – brown-coloured vomit

Clopidogrel (Plavix[®])

Clopidogrel works in a similar way to aspirin. If you have recently had a heart attack or stroke, you may be given clopidogrel. If you have been hospitalised with unstable angina or 'acute coronary syndrome', you may be given clopidogrel *and* aspirin.

Let your doctor know if you have ever had a stomach ulcer or condition that causes bleeding.

It is important to take clopidogrel every day and complete the course.



Do not stop taking clopidogrel without contacting your doctor or cardiologist, or you will be at risk of a heart attack or stroke.

Warfarin

Warfarin is an anticoagulant that helps to stop blood from clotting. Warfarin may be given to you if your heart beats irregularly (atrial fibrillation, or AF). It can also be used for a deep vein clot in the leg (deep vein thrombosis, or DVT) or a clot in the lung (pulmonary embolism, or PE).

You will need regular blood tests to make sure the dose is right for you.
Talk to your doctor, nurse and pharmacist about this.

Is there anything you should avoid?

Talk to your pharmacist or doctor before you take any other medicines, including traditional, natural or herbal supplements.

Some herbal supplements can cause bleeding and should be avoided, e.g.

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| feverfew | ginseng |
| garlic | saw palmetto |
| ginger | white willow |
| gingko biloba | vitamin E |



Some types of medicine used for pain relief (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) can cause bleeding and stomach ulcers when used together with aspirin and other blood-thinning medicines.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist before using any of these medicines:

Medicine name	Brand name(s)
Diclofenac	Apo-Diclo [®] , Cataflam [®] , Diclax-SR [®] , Flameril [®] , Voltaren [®] , Voltfast [®]
Ibuprofen	ACT-3 [®] , Brufen [®] , Ibucare [®] , I-Profen [®] , Nurofen [®] , Panafen [®]
Mefenamic acid	Ponstan [®]
Naproxen	Naprogenic [®] , Naprosyn [®] , Naxen [®] , Noflam [®] , Sonaflam [®] , Synflex [®]

Dabigatran (Pradaxa®)

Like warfarin, dabigatran is used to prevent blood clots if you have an irregular heart beat (atrial fibrillation or AF) or if you have recently had hip or knee surgery.

If you are taking dabigatran, let your doctor know if you notice any unusual bruising or bleeding, especially if you have recently been taking warfarin.

Do not start taking any other medicines, including vitamins and herbal supplements without checking with your doctor or pharmacist first.

Keep dabigatran in the original packet from the pharmacy; it will not work as well if it is kept in another container. It is important you remember to take dabigatran every day.

ACE inhibitors (angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors) and ARBs (angiotensin receptor blockers)

ACE inhibitors work by lowering blood pressure and by stopping the heart from enlarging after a heart attack. They also help the heart to recover and work better.

ARBs (candesartan and losartan) have the same effect as ACE inhibitors, but work in a slightly different way.

Names of some ACE inhibitors and ARBs

Medicine name	Brand name(s)
Candesartan	Atacand®, Candestar®
Captopril	Apo-Captopril®, Capoten®
Cilazapril	Inhibace®, Zapril®
Enalapril	Renitec®
Lisinopril	Privilin®
Losartan	Cozaar®, Lostaar®
Quinapril	Accupril®

There are some ACE inhibitors and ARBs that also have a diuretic (to remove excess water) in them, e.g. Inhibace Plus®, Accuretic®, Hyzaar®.

When you first start on an ACE inhibitor or ARB

You may feel dizzy and faint, especially after your first dose. Get up slowly; take a few minutes to sit on your bed or on a chair first.

Your body should get used to the medicine within a few days. Your doctor will **start you on a low dose** and then **increase it** slowly over a few weeks.

You will need to have regular **blood tests** to check your kidneys. This is because some people have problems with their kidneys when they take these medicines.

What are some of the side effects?

All medicines have some side effects, but most people will not experience them.

Some people may find that they get:

- A headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness or faintness
- A rash (rare)
- A change in their taste (rare)

Tell your doctor if any of these things happen to you. Sometimes these side effects happen straight away; sometimes they happen months later.

If you are taking an ACE inhibitor and get a dry cough, let your doctor know; you may be changed to an ARB (candesartan or losartan).

**Some side effects can be serious but are rare.
Phone your doctor straight away if your lips, throat or tongue swell up.**

Is there anything you should avoid?

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before you use any other medicines including medicine that you may buy for pain relief and gout (see over). These medicines may affect your ACE inhibitor or ARB.

Medicine name	Brand name(s)
Diclofenac	Apo-Diclo [®] , Cataflam [®] , Diclax-SR [®] , Flameril [®] , Voltaren [®] , Voltfast [®]
Ibuprofen	ACT-3 [®] , Brufen [®] , Ibucare [®] , I-Profen [®] , Nurofen [®] , Panafen [®]
Mefenamic acid	Ponstan [®]
Naproxen	Naprogenic [®] , Naprosyn [®] , Naxen [®] , Noflam [®] , Sonaflam [®] , Synflex [®]

If you are taking ACE inhibitors or ARBs, avoid salt substitutes such as NoSalt[®], Salt Substitute[®] and Lite salt[®] because these products have potassium in them.

Beta blockers

Beta blockers are medicines that help to:

- Lower blood pressure
- Slow the heart rate
- Prevent angina (chest pain/discomfort)
- Lower the chance of heart attacks

Names of common beta blockers

Medicine name	Brand name(s)
Atenolol	Pacific Atenolol [®]
Carvedilol	Dilatrend [®]
Celiprolol	Celol [®]
Metoprolol	Betaloc CR [®] , Lopresor [®] , Myloc CR [®]
Sotalol	Sotacor [®]



Before you start a beta blocker

Tell your doctor if you have asthma because beta blockers might make your asthma worse.

When you first start on a beta blocker

- It can take a while for you to feel better – usually a few months
- Your doctor will start you on a **low dose**, then slowly **increase** it over the next few weeks

Do not suddenly stop taking your beta blocker or your condition will get worse.
This can be dangerous, so talk to your doctor first.

What are some of the side effects?

When you first start on a beta blocker or have your dose increased, you may feel tired or have other side effects for a few days.

Tell your doctor if you get any of the following and they become troublesome or do not go away:

- Cold hands and feet
- Dizziness or tiredness
- Nightmares or sleep problems
- Constipation or diarrhoea
- Rash or itching
- Depression
- Nausea
- Impotence



Some side effects can be serious but are rare. Phone your doctor straight away if you are wheezing, have an unusually slow heart beat or feel as if you may faint.



Is there anything you should avoid?

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before you use any other medicines or supplements. Some types of medicine for pain relief and gout (see below) may make your condition worse.

Medicine name	Brand name(s)
Diclofenac	Apo-Diclo [®] , Cataflam [®] , Diclax-SR [®] , Flameril [®] , Voltaren [®] , Voltfast [®]
Ibuprofen	ACT-3 [®] , Brufen [®] , Ibucare [®] , I-Profen [®] , Nurofen [®] , Panafen [®]
Mefenamic acid	Ponstan [®]
Naproxen	Naprogesic [®] , Naprosyn [®] , Naxen [®] , Noflam [®] , Sonaflam [®] , Synflex [®]

Grapefruit and oranges as fruit, juice or marmalade can affect **celiprolol**; talk to your pharmacist about this.

Cholesterol (lipid) lowering medicines

These medicines are used to treat high levels of cholesterol in your blood.

There is 'good' (HDL) and 'bad' (LDL) cholesterol. These medicines will help to lower your 'bad' cholesterol. This means less fat will build up in your blood vessel walls.

You will need to have blood tests from time to time to measure your cholesterol levels and see how well your medicine is working. Your doctor will do this every one to three months until your levels are controlled, then about every six months.

The cholesterol levels that you should aim for are the following:

Type of cholesterol	Ideal level (mmol/L)
Total cholesterol (TC)	↓ less than 4
LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol)	↓ less than 2*
HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol)	↑ more than 1
Triglycerides	↓ less than 1.7

* Your doctor may recommend lower levels, e.g. less than 1.7



A healthy diet and exercise will help lower your cholesterol further. Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist can give you more information about this.

Names of common medicines

Medicine name	Brand name(s)
Atorvastatin	Lipitor®, Lorstat®
Bezafibrate	Bezalip Retard®, Fibalip®
Ezetimibe	Ezetrol®
Simvastatin	Lipex®, Arrow Simva®, SimvaRex®
Rosuvastatin	Crestor®

Some people may be given both ezetimibe and simvastatin, or given these combined into one tablet called Vytorin®.

What are some of the side effects?

Most people do not get side effects from these medicines. However, if you get muscle pain or weakness, **stop taking the medicine** and phone your doctor straight away.

Let your doctor know if you have:

- Upset stomach or vomiting
- Diarrhoea or constipation
- Impotence (with bezafibrate)
- Stomach pain
- Skin rash
- Tiredness

Is there anything you need to avoid?

It is very important to check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any other medicines including antibiotics.



Grapefruit as fruit, juice or marmalade can affect simvastatin, atorvastatin and Vytorin®; talk to your pharmacist about this. **Rosuvastatin is not affected by grapefruit.**



Other medicines you may be taking

Diuretics

These take excess fluid out of your body by making you go to the toilet (pass water) more often. Spironolactone is a type of diuretic that may be given to people who also have heart failure.

Nitrates

Glyceryl trinitrate (GTN) is a quick-acting nitrate medicine that is used to treat angina (chest pain). It is taken as a tablet (Lycinate®) or spray (Nitrolingual®) under your tongue. Your doctor should already have given you this. **See the back page of this booklet for your Angina Action Plan.**

Long-acting nitrates (Corangin®, Duride®) are given to some people to prevent angina attacks.

Calcium channel blockers

These also help control angina, lower blood pressure and control your heart beat (e.g. diltiazem, felodipine, verapamil).

Medicines for erectile dysfunction

Some medicines for erectile dysfunction interact with medicines for angina. It is very important that you let your doctor know if you are taking, or thinking about taking, medicines for erectile dysfunction, e.g. Viagra® or Avigra® (sildenafil), Cialis® (tadalafil), or Levitra® (vardenafil).

It is very dangerous to take these medicines with nitrates (e.g. GTN spray or tablets).

If you have chest pain while taking medicines for erectile dysfunction, **call an ambulance straight away.**

If you need more information about any of these medicines,
please talk to your pharmacist, doctor or nurse.

Tips to help you with your medicines

- So you don't forget to take your medicines, it's a good idea to always take them at meal times
- Your pharmacist can put your medicines in a special pack (blister pack) to help you remember to take them
- You can use a pill organiser box (from your pharmacy)
- Keep a list of your medicines and when to take them (or use a 'yellow card'); ask your doctor or pharmacist for help with this

Take your medicines list or yellow card with you whenever you go to your pharmacy, doctor or to hospital.

What should you do if you forget your medicines?

It is important that you do not forget to take your medicines.

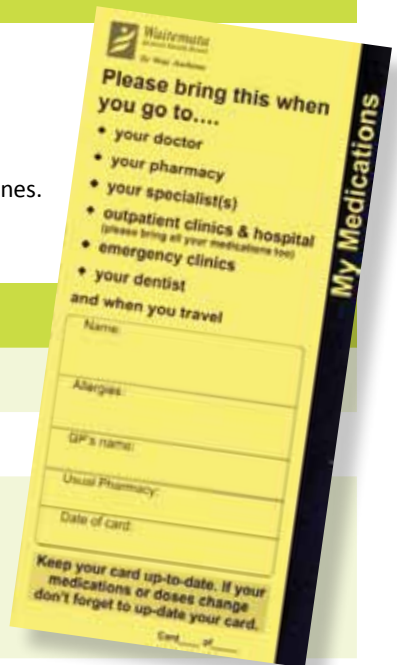
If you do forget:

Take it as soon as possible

Do not take double doses at the same time

If it is almost time for your next dose:

1. Don't take the dose you missed
2. Wait and take your next dose at your normal time



What if you think you have other side effects?

If you think one of your medicines is giving you a side effect that is not in this booklet, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

Can you take other medicines, herbal, traditional or natural products?

Talk to your pharmacist or doctor before you use any other medicines, including traditional, natural or herbal supplements to make sure they will not interact with your regular medicines.

Some herbal supplements can cause bleeding, and should be avoided, e.g.

feverfew	ginseng	garlic	saw palmetto
ginger	vitamin E	gingko biloba	white willow

Some types of medicine (known as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) that you can buy for pain relief and gout may affect your heart medicines or increase your risk of bleeding.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist before using any of these medicines.

Medicine name	Brand name(s)
Diclofenac	Apo-Diclo®, Cataflam®, Diclax-SR®, Flameril®, Voltaren®, Voltfast®
Ibuprofen	ACT-3®, Brufen®, Ibucare®, I-Profen®, Nurofen®, Panafen®
Mefenamic acid	Ponstan®
Naproxen	Naprogenic®, Naprosyn®, Naxen®, Noflam®, Sonaflam®, Synflex®

What if any of your medicines look different or the names change?

- Talk to your pharmacist or doctor if the name on your medicine packet or bottle is not what you expected, or if your medicine looks different
- Check to make sure you have received the correct medicine before you leave the pharmacy

How should you store your medicines?

- Keep your medicines in a cool, dry place; do not leave them in places that get sun or in the bathroom where they can get damp
- **Keep out of reach of children**
- Throw out old medicines or those that are past their 'expiry date' – your pharmacist can advise you on this

Angina Action Plan

If you do not have an Action Plan – contact your GP or practice nurse to see what you need to do

- Stop what you are doing and rest
- Take one puff of your glyceryl trinitrate (GTN) spray, or one GTN tablet under your tongue
- If the chest discomfort does not go away within 5 minutes, **repeat your GTN spray (or repeat tablet after 3 minutes)**

If your chest discomfort lasts more than 10 minutes dial 111 and ask for an ambulance.

Dial 111 immediately if:

- Your pain is more severe (crushing, heavy, tight) than what you usually feel during an angina attack, or
- It spreads to your shoulder, neck, jaw or down both arms, or
- You are sweating, feel sick, vomit, get short of breath or faint

Lie flat if you feel faint, or sit up if you are breathless. You may be having a heart attack – every minute matters.

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DISCLAIMER: This Action Plan is intended to assist with the management of angina in consultation with your doctor or health care professional. This is not a substitute for individual medical advice.

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