

Cardiovascular Medications

Antihypertensives and Antianginals

- ❖ It is important for you to become familiar with your medication. If you can understand what it does you can assist your doctor in evaluating the effectiveness and monitor side effects.
- ❖ Discuss with your doctor expected side effects and symptoms to report immediately.
- ❖ Do not stop taking or skip doses of your medications.
- ❖ Refill all medications unless your doctor specified a specific length of treatment.
- ❖ You should carry a list of every medication you take including name, dosage, and frequency including over the counter medications. Always check with your doctor before taking over the counter medications. See Discharge Depart summary for most updated list.

Beta Blockers

- ❖ YOU ARE CURRENTLY ON: _____ . See Discharge Depart Summary for most updated list.
- ❖ USED TO TREAT: high blood pressure, abnormal heart rhythm, long term prevention of another heart attack
- ❖ HOW IT WORKS: blocks excitation of heart which slows heart rate, decreases the heart's force of contraction and lowers blood pressure. By lowering blood pressure and heart rate, your heart requires less oxygen therefore preventing angina.
- ❖ SIDE EFFECTS: low blood pressure, low heart rate, fluid retention, worsening of asthma or emphysema, masks signs of hypoglycemia
- ❖ Since beta blockers may decrease heart rate, check your pulse before taking. If the pulse is less than 50 beats per minute on three checks, you should contact your doctor before taking this medicine. Also contact your doctor if you begin to retain fluid or have difficulty breathing.
- ❖ Never stop taking your beta blocker unless you are advised to do so. This drug is usually tapered before stopping.

Ace Inhibitors

- ❖ YOU ARE CURRENTLY ON: _____ . See Discharge Depart Summary for most updated list.
- ❖ USED TO TREAT: high blood pressure, congestive heart failure
- ❖ HOW IT WORKS: prevents angiotensin converting enzymes (ACE) from working. This results in dilation (opening) of arteries and veins.
- ❖ SIDE EFFECTS: low blood pressure, alteration in kidney function, nonproductive persistent cough. Swelling of the face or mouth should be reported immediately.
- ❖ NSAIDs such as ibuprofen and naprosyn (Advil, Motrin, and Aleve) will decrease effects.

Angiotension Receptor Blocker (ARBs)

- ❖ YOU ARE CURRENTLY ON:_____ . See Discharge Depart Summary for most updated list.
- ❖ USED TO TREAT: high blood pressure, congestive heart failure
- ❖ HOW IT WORKS: blocks the effects of angiotension II resulting in dilation of arteries and veins
- ❖ SIDE EFFECTS: diarrhea, upper respiratory infection, heartburn, fatigue, high potassium, low sodium, low blood pressure

Calcium Channel Blockers

- ❖ YOU ARE CURRENTLY ON:_____ . See Discharge Depart Summary for most updated list.
- ❖ USED TO TREAT: high blood pressure, angina, rapid heart beats, prevention of coronary spasm
- ❖ HOW IT WORKS: blocks the action of calcium in cells of heart and blood vessels causing relaxation in blood vessels and decrease in force of contraction
- ❖ SIDE EFFECTS: change in heart rhythm, low blood pressure, fluid retention

Other Antihypertensives

- ❖ YOU ARE CURRENTLY ON:_____ . See Discharge Depart Summary for most updated list.
- ❖ USED TO TREAT: high blood pressure
- ❖ HOW IT WORKS: various mechanisms on your body to keep arteries and /or veins relaxed which decreases blood pressure
- ❖ SIDE EFFECTS: specific to each drug

The medications that lower blood pressure can also cause constipation, depression, and sexual dysfunction (such as impotence). If you experience any of these, do not stop taking your medicine. Discuss this with your doctor so that an effective plan of treatment can be continued.

Any medication that affects blood pressure could cause blood pressure to drop too much, especially when standing. This is called **orthostatic hypotension**. You may feel dizzy, lightheaded, or pass out. To prevent this, change positions slowly. Report these symptoms if they persist after standing a couple of minutes.

<p style="text-align: center;">East Jefferson General Hospital Cardiac Rehab Department 504-503-4145</p>
