

ACE Inhibitors

KEY POINTS

- Angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors help prevent, treat, or improve heart problems, high blood pressure, kidney disease, stroke, and other medical conditions.
 - Follow the directions that come with your medicine, including information about food or alcohol. Make sure you know how and when to take your medicine. Do not take more or less than you are supposed to take.
 - If you have any questions, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for more information.
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What are ACE inhibitors used for?

Angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors help prevent, treat, or improve the symptoms of health problems such as:

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Heart failure
- Kidney problems if you have diabetes
- Strokes
- Heart attack

These medicines may be used for other conditions as determined by your healthcare provider.

There are several different ACE inhibitors. They may be used alone or with other medicines. Which ACE inhibitor is best for you depends on your condition and health.

How do they work?

ACE inhibitors relax and open up blood vessels by blocking the angiotensin converting enzyme in your body, which narrows blood vessels and raises blood pressure. (Enzymes are chemicals that help the cells of your body work.) The effect of this enzyme on the body is helpful when your blood pressure is too low to bring enough blood to some parts of your body such as the kidneys. This may happen, for example, if you have lost a lot of blood. However, sometimes the body narrows the blood vessels and raises the blood pressure when it doesn't need to. This can make the heart work too hard and can hurt other body organs. Medicine that relaxes and opens up the blood vessels helps blood flow more easily. This lowers blood pressure and makes it easier for your heart to pump blood.

What else do I need to know about this medicine?

- Follow the directions that come with your medicine, including information about food or alcohol. Make sure you know how and when to take your medicine. Do not take more or less than you are supposed to take.
- Many medicines have side effects. A side effect is a symptom or problem that is caused by the medicine. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist what side effects the medicine may cause and what you should do if you have side effects.
- If you are thinking of getting pregnant or could become pregnant, you should discuss this with your provider. Some blood pressure medicines, including ACE inhibitors, can harm an unborn baby. You will need to stop these medicines if you want to get pregnant. Tell your provider right away if you get pregnant while taking this medicine.
- Try to get all of your prescriptions filled at the same place. Your pharmacist can help make sure that all of your medicines are safe to take together.
- Keep a list of your medicines with you. List all of the prescription medicines, nonprescription medicines, supplements, natural remedies, and vitamins that you take. Tell all healthcare providers who treat you about all of the products you are taking.

If you have any questions, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for more information. Be sure to keep all appointments for provider visits or tests.

This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.

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