

BETA BLOCKERS

WHAT ARE BETA BLOCKERS USED FOR?

This class of drug is used to treat high blood pressure. Sometimes, they are used to treat chest pain (angina). They are also used to treat people with irregular heart beat (arrhythmia) or congestive heart failure. These drugs can be taken only by prescription from your physician.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON BRAND NAMES OF BETA BLOCKERS?

- Betapace
- Blocadren
- Coreg
- Corgard
- Inderal
- Lopressor
- Sectral
- Toprol-XL
- Your prescription brand name: _____

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HOW DO BETA BLOCKERS WORK IN THE BODY?

Beta blockers change electrical impulses in the heart, slowing heart rate. They also relax blood vessels, and lower blood pressure.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS FROM TAKING BETA BLOCKERS?

Taking this medication can help your blood pressure, but you need to be aware of the possible risks. These include chest pain, difficulty breathing, slow heart beat, or depression. It can worsen congestive heart failure.

Beta blockers can cause an asthma attack. Tell your doctor if you have asthma.

There is some risk with this drug if you have diabetes, asthma, hypoglycemia, kidney disease, emphysema, bronchitis, slow heartbeat, liver disease, overactive thyroid, psoriasis, or depression. Tell your doctor if you have any of these conditions.

Do not take beta blockers early in your pregnancy. Some beta blockers may cause low blood sugar and breathing problems in pregnant women. They may also lower the heart rate of the fetus. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or if you may become pregnant.

Tell your doctor if you have ever had a bad reaction to another drug. Also tell your doctor if you have any allergies to drugs, foods, preservatives, or dyes.

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Tell your doctor if you are taking any other drugs or herbals.

Before taking this drug, talk with your doctor about your risks.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON SIDE EFFECTS OF BETA BLOCKERS?

Not all the side effects happen to everyone. Some side effects may need medical attention. You will receive more information with your specific brand. Some possible side effects are:

- Dizziness
- Light-headedness
- Fatigue
- Trouble sleeping
- Anxiety
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Numbness and tingling

Call your doctor if you have any of these side effects.

HOW IS THIS DRUG TAKEN?

It is taken in the form of a tablet or capsule. Your doctor will decide the dose right for you.

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Check with your doctor before taking any other drugs while you are on this drug. Tell your other doctors that you are taking this medicine.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT BETA BLOCKERS?

- Alcohol can stop this medicine from helping you. If you are taking this medicine, do not drink more than 8 ounces of wine, 24 ounces of beer, or 2 ounces of alcohol each day.
- Because this medicine can make you feel tired or dizzy, do not operate heavy equipment or drive until you see if you have these side effects.
- Some side effects are more likely to occur in the elderly.

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