

**Prepared for patient:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Patient counseled by:** \_\_\_\_\_

# ACE Inhibitors



## What are ACE Inhibitors?

- ACE inhibitors are a class of medications which are used to lower the blood pressure. ACE stands for angiotensin-converting enzyme. This class of medications blocks the effects of this enzyme and as a result lowers the blood pressure.
- Maintaining a low blood pressure is recommended in all individuals who have experienced a stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA).
- ACE Inhibitors are considered a preferred choice for lowering blood pressure in individuals who have experienced a stroke or TIA.
- There are several different ACE inhibitors including:
  - Quinapril (Accupril)
  - Ramipril (Altace)
  - Benazepril (Lotensin)
  - Captopril (Capoten)
  - Enalapril (Vasotec)
  - Fosinopril (Monopril)
  - Lisinopril (Prinivil, Zestril)
  - Moexipril (Univasc)
  - Trandolapril (Mavik)
- ACE Inhibitors are also a part of several combination medications. If you have a question regarding whether your medication is an ACE inhibitor or contains an ACE inhibitor ask your pharmacist or another health care professional.
- ACE Inhibitors will not make you “feel better”, but they are powerful medications working inside your body to help lower your blood pressure.

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## How should I take my ACE inhibitor?

- Follow the instructions on your prescription vial carefully. ACE inhibitors are sometimes taken once daily or can be taken multiple times daily. Take your ACE inhibitor exactly as directed by your doctor.
- Take your ACE inhibitor around the same time(s) each day with a full glass of water.
- ACE inhibitors can be taken with or without food.
- Take your ACE inhibitor for as long as your doctor directs you. Do not discontinue use of your ACE inhibitor without consulting your doctor. There is no cure for high blood pressure. Taking your blood pressure medications regularly helps to control your blood pressure.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the dose you missed and take your next dose as scheduled. Do not double up on doses.

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## What else should I know?

- Certain over-the-counter medications including Advil or Motrin (ibuprofen) and Aleve (naproxen) should not be used in high doses for long periods of time in certain individuals taking an ACE inhibitor. This combination may cause kidney damage in patients with poor kidney function. If you use these medications discuss this matter with your doctor.
- Always go to the same pharmacy so your pharmacist can check your complete list of prescription medications for interactions with your ACE inhibitor.
- ACE inhibitors can increase your body's potassium levels. Avoid salt substitutes that contain potassium while taking your ACE inhibitor.
- You may feel dizzy while taking an ACE inhibitor. This is more common when first starting your medication. Do not drive or operate machinery if you feel dizzy.
- Your doctor should monitor your blood pressure regularly. You can also monitor your blood pressure at home or at your local pharmacy. The goal blood pressure in most individuals is <140/90 mmHg. This goal may be lower in certain patients, such as people with diabetes or kidney disease. Discuss your individual goal blood pressure with your doctor.
- Occasionally your doctor may want you to get a blood test to check your potassium level or kidney function. It is very important to go to all your scheduled doctor appointments and blood tests.
- ACE inhibitors should not be taken in pregnancy and are not recommended in breast feeding.
- Store your medication at room temperature away from light, moisture, and children.

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## Are there side effects to ACE inhibitors?

Tell your doctor *immediately* if you experience any of the following:

- Decreased amount of urine produced
- Difficulty breathing or swallowing
- Severe dizziness, light headedness, or fainting
- Chest pain or palpitations
- Fever or chills
- Numbness or tingling in fingers and toes
- Skin rash or itching
- Swelling of face, lips, or tongue

**Less serious side effects: Notify your doctor if they persist or are bothersome.**

- Change in taste
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Cough

(Dry persistent cough occurs in about 10% of patients. It is not dangerous but may mean you cannot tolerate ACE inhibitors. Call your doctor if you think you may be experiencing this side effect.)

If you have any additional questions regarding your medication, do not hesitate to contact a healthcare professional.

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**Reference: National Guideline Clearinghouse**

[www.guidelines.gov](http://www.guidelines.gov)