

# Ask The Expert Knowing Your Medicine



Patients with heart conditions are often prescribed an array of medicines. Principal Pharmacist Ms Hooi Pik Yee shares what to take note of to help patients understand the various pills that they have to take on a daily basis.

Commonly Prescribed drugs	Function	What to take note of
<b>Antiplatelets</b> (Low dose Aspirin)	Blood thinner	This drug can cause gastrointestinal ulceration and gastric discomfort, and hence should be taken after food. It may cause bleeding. If there are signs of bleeding (e.g. black stool or unexplained bruising), see your doctor immediately.
<b>Beta blockers</b> (Atenolol, Metoprolol, Bisoprolol and Carvedilol)	To control blood pressure and treat heart failure	High blood pressure is often asymptomatic and the medication must therefore be taken on a regular basis unless otherwise advised by your doctor. Patients may experience giddiness which is due to a drop in blood pressure. Some may feel fatigue as the drug can reduce heart rate. If these symptoms persist, consult a doctor and do not stop taking the medications abruptly on your own.
<b>Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitors</b> (enalapril, captopril and lisinopril)	To treat blood pressure and heart failure	<p>This drug can also increase potassium level which is a form of salt in the body. Therefore, patients on this drug must not take any salt supplement without asking doctor for advice.</p> <p>The most common side effect of this group of drug is dry, persistent cough. If the cough does not go away after a week, see your doctor.</p>
<b>Thiazides</b> (Hydrochlorothiazide)	To control blood pressure	This class of drug causes low potassium and sodium levels (electrolytes disturbance) that may result in confusion. Dehydration is another common side effect and is very common in elderly patients. It is often given together with potassium supplement to prevent low potassium level which is also known as hypokalemia.
<b>Statins</b> (Simvastatin, lovastatin and Atorvastatin)	To reduce bad cholesterol and increase good cholesterol	<p>This group of drugs has proven to prevent cardiovascular events such as myocardial infarction or heart attack. They are also used to prevent stroke.</p> <p>This class of drug can cause inflammation of the muscle. If you experience any unexplained muscle ache, dark colour/tea colour urine, consult your doctor immediately. Most often the therapy has to be discontinued temporarily.</p>

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Please contact:

The Editor, Lifeline

Corporate Communications

National University Hospital, 1E Kent Ridge Road, NUHS Tower Block, Level 13, Singapore 119228.

Tel: 6772 4695 Email: nuh\_enquiries@nuhs.edu.sg

Fax: 6774 0936 Website: www.nuh.com.sg

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