



Understanding your heart medicines

Get the best from your medicines



Veterans' **MATES**

www.veteransmates.net.au

Provided by:

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UniSA

Medicines are a key part of long-term treatment if you have angina or have had a heart attack.

Take positive steps by understanding what your medicines are for, when and how to take them, and how they affect you.

Why do I need to take so many medicines?

If you have angina or have had a heart attack, a combination of medicines may be needed to reduce the risk of further heart problems.

Heart medicines work in slightly different ways. Most change how the heart or circulatory system works to:

- improve blood flow
- reduce cholesterol levels
- reduce the heart's workload
- control the heart rate
- prevent blood clots.

It is important to continue taking your heart medicines as instructed by your doctor, even when you are feeling better.



Know your medicines

Each of the medicines you may need for your heart has a generic name (the active ingredient) and a brand name. It is important to know these names.

If you don't know the names of your heart medicines, ask your doctor or pharmacist to help you fill out the names next to each class of medicine that you are currently prescribed.

Antiplatelet agents

Beta blockers

ACE inhibitors (or angiotensin receptor blockers)

Statins

Nitrates

Other heart medicines

Some types of heart medicine may not be suitable for you. Talk to your doctor to understand why.

Like all medicines, heart medicines can have unwanted side effects. Although they are often mild and/or temporary, you need to know what to do if they occur.

**Ask for a Home Medicines Review.
Ask your doctor or pharmacist for
Consumer Medicine Information
(CMI) leaflets.**

Ask for a Home Medicines Review

If you have recently started using medicines for your heart, it is a good time for a Home Medicines Review to:

- help you understand what each medicine is for
- teach you the best way to use your medicines
- teach you how to identify possible side effects and what to do if they occur
- help you to maintain an up to date list of all your medicines.

If you haven't had a Home Medicines Review in the last 12 months, talk to your doctor.

What should I do?

There are a number of things you need to know about your heart medicines:

- What is the type and name of each of my medicines?
- How does each medicine work?
- How and when should I take each medicine?
- What are the possible side effects and what should I do if these occur?
- For how long do I need to take each of my medicines?

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure about any of the questions above.

Talk to your doctor before starting, changing or stopping any medicines including non-prescription, herbal and natural medicines.

Ask your doctor for a chest pain action plan.

Ask your doctor for advice on diet and lifestyle changes that could further reduce your risk of heart problems.