



Patient & Family Guide

2024

Beta Blockers



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Beta Blockers

Why do I need this medication?

Beta blockers help your heart beat slower and at a more steady rate, so it does not have to work as hard.

This medication can be used to treat high blood pressure and angina (chest pain), and to lower the risk of repeated heart attacks.

Examples:

- › Metoprolol (Lopressor[®], Betaloc[®])
- › Atenolol (Tenormin[®])
- › Carvedilol (Coreg[®])
- › Acebutolol (Sectral[®], Monitan[®])
- › Bisoprolol (Monocor[®])
- › Nadolol (Corgard[®])

My medication: _____

How do I store this medication?

- Store your medication in a tightly closed container at room temperature (15 to 30 °C) away from heat, moisture, and direct light.
- **Do not** store it in the bathroom.
- Keep all medication out of the reach of children and pets.

How do I take this medication?

- Take this medication exactly as told, even if you feel fine.
- Most beta blockers can be taken with or without food.
- Take it at the same time(s) each day.

If you are taking carvedilol (Coreg®):

- › Take it with food.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Take the missed dose as soon as you remember.
- Skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your next dose.
- **Do not** take 2 doses at the same time.

Medications and foods to avoid

- Talk with your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) or pharmacist before taking any other medications, including over-the-counter products.
- Your primary health care provider or dietitian may suggest a low-salt eating plan to help manage your condition.

Warnings

- Check with your primary health care provider before taking a beta blocker if you have:
 - › Emphysema
 - › Asthma
 - › Bronchitis
 - › Heart disease
 - › A thyroid disorder
 - › Raynaud’s disease
 - › Diabetes
- **Do not stop taking this medication suddenly. You may need to take a lower dose before you stop taking it fully.**
- This medication may change your blood sugar level. It may also cover up the symptoms of very low blood sugar (hypoglycemia).
 - › **If you have diabetes, you may need to measure your blood sugar more carefully.**
 - › **Tell your primary health care provider if you have any changes in your blood sugar level.**
- This medication may make you lightheaded (feel dizzy or like you may faint).

- **To prevent lightheadedness, do not:**
 - › stand up suddenly.
 - › stand for long periods of time.
 - › exercise in hot weather.
 - › take long, hot showers or baths.
- You may be more sensitive to cold weather while you are taking this medication.
- Tell your health care provider or dentist about all of the medications you are taking before you have any surgery.

Call your primary health care provider or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away if you have:

- › A slow or an irregular heartbeat
- › Chest pain that lasts longer than 15 minutes
- › Wheezing or trouble breathing
- › Fainting
- › Very bad dizziness
- › Swelling in your legs or ankles

If you have any of these less serious side effects, talk to your primary health care provider or pharmacist:

- › Dizziness
- › Drowsiness
- › Weakness
- › Trouble sleeping
- › Strange dreams or nightmares
- › Feeling depressed
- › Trouble having sex
- › Cold hands and feet
- › Numbness in your fingers or toes

If you have other side effects that you think are caused by this medication, tell your primary health care provider.

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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