

Poison Prevention Press

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Save Poison Help,
1-800-222-1222, as a contact
in your mobile phone.

Did you know that...

- According to the CDC, 17.7% of adults (age 18-64) and 70.2% of older adults (age 65+) took at least one cardiovascular medicine in the past 30 days?

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Heart Medicines

Cardiovascular (heart) medicines are used to treat diseases of the heart and high blood pressure. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), they are one of the most common prescription drugs taken by adults. Let's look at the different types of cardiovascular medicines and how we can take them safely.

Types of Cardiovascular Medicines

Anticoagulant – commonly known as blood thinners. This type of medicine helps slow the body's process for making blood clots. Blood clots can cause stroke, pulmonary embolism (blood clot in the lung), and heart attack.

Antiplatelet – prevents blood platelets from sticking together, ultimately keeping blood clots from forming.

ACE Inhibitors – ACE stands for angiotensin-converting enzyme. This type of medicine works by relaxing the veins and arteries to lower blood pressure.

Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers – relaxes your veins and arteries to prevent blood pressure from rising. Angiotensin is a chemical in your body that narrows your blood vessels, so when you take this type of medicine it allows your veins and arteries to widen, making your blood pressure lower.

Beta Blockers – reduces the heart rate and the workload of the heart, which lowers your blood pressure.

Calcium Channel Blockers – lowers blood pressure by preventing calcium from entering the cells of the heart and arteries. Blocking calcium allows the blood vessels to relax and open.

Cholesterol-Lowering Medicines – used to lower low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol levels. Cholesterol creates plaques in the arteries, causing them to be narrower. When arteries are narrow, less blood can flow through them.

Diuretics – sometimes called water pills, these help rid your body of sodium (salt) and water. They do this by helping your kidneys release more sodium into your urine. The sodium helps remove water in your blood. If there is less fluid in your veins and arteries, your blood pressure will go down.

Vasodilators – relaxes muscles in the walls of the arteries and veins to prevent them from tightening so that blood can flow easily.

Safely Taking Cardiovascular Medicines

- Take the medicine as prescribed. You can find the instructions on the prescription label.
- Talk to your health care provider before you stop taking the medicine.
- Ask your health care provider or pharmacists about possible drug or food interactions.
- Call the poison center if you think you may have taken the wrong dose or a double dose.
- Store medicines up, away, and out of sight!
- If you are experiencing side effects, our pharmacists and nurses are here to help.

If you took a cardiovascular medicine that wasn't meant for you, took the wrong amount, or have other questions, call a poison specialist at 1-800-222-1222. We are available 24/7/365 and calling is free and confidential.