

Cardiac Rehab Handout – Medication

Diuretics (Fluid Pill) – (HCTZ, Spironolactone) What the Medication Does

Causes the body to rid itself of excess fluids and sodium through urination. Helps to reduce the heart's workload. Also decreases the buildup of fluid in the lungs and other parts of the body, such as the ankles and legs. Different diuretics remove fluid at varied rates and through different methods.

Reason for Medication

- Used to help lower blood pressure.
- Used to help reduce swelling (edema) from excess buildup of fluid in the body.

ACE Inhibitors – (Enalapril, Lisinopril) What the Medication Does

Expands blood vessels and decreases resistance by lowering levels of angiotensin II. Allows blood to flow more easily and makes the heart's work easier or more efficient.

Reason for Medication

- Used to treat or improve symptoms of cardiovascular conditions including high blood pressure and heart failure.

ARB Inhibitors – (Diovan, Benicar) What the Medication Does

Rather than lowering levels of angiotensin II (as ACE inhibitors do) angiotensin II receptor blockers prevent this chemical from having any effect on the heart and blood vessels. This keeps blood pressure from rising.

Reason for Medication

- Used to treat or improve symptoms of cardiovascular conditions including high blood pressure and heart failure.

ARN Inhibitors – (Entresto) What the Medication Does

Neprilysin is an enzyme that breaks down natural substances in the body that open narrowed arteries. By limiting the effect of neprilysin, it increases the effects of these substances and improves artery opening and blood flow, reduces sodium (salt) retention, and decreases strain on the heart.

Reason for Medication

- For the treatment of heart failure

Beta-Blockers – (Toprol, Betapace, Coreg) What the Medication Does

Decreases the heart rate and force of contraction, which lowers blood pressure and makes the heart beat more slowly and with less force.

Reason for Medication

- Used to lower blood pressure.
- Used for cardiac arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythms)
- Used to treat chest pain (angina)
- Used to help prevent future heart attacks in patients who had a heart attack.

Calcium Channel-Blockers – (Norvasc, Cardizem) What the Medication Does

Interrupts the movement of calcium into the cells of the heart and blood vessels. May decrease the heart's pumping strength and relax blood vessels.

Reason for Medication

- Used to treat high blood pressure, chest pain (angina) caused by reduced blood supply to the heart muscle and some arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythms).

Cholesterol Lowering – (Lipitor, Zetia, Vytorin) What the Medication Does

Various medications can lower blood cholesterol levels, but drugs other than statins are usually only used for patients in whom statins are not effective or who have serious side effects from statin therapy. They work in the body in different ways. Some affect the liver, some work in the intestines and some interrupt the formation of cholesterol from circulating in the blood.

Reason for Medication

- Used to lower LDL ("bad") cholesterol.

Vasodilators – (Isosorbide Mono or Dinitrate) What the Medication Does

Relaxes blood vessels and decreases blood pressure.

A category of vasodilators called nitrates increases the supply of blood and oxygen to the heart while reducing its workload which can ease chest pain (angina). Nitroglycerin is available as a pill to be swallowed or absorbed under the tongue (sublingual), a spray, and as a topical application (cream).

Reason for Medication

- Used to ease chest pain (angina)

Antiplatelet – (Plavix, Effient) What the Medication Does

Keeps blood clots from forming by preventing blood platelets from sticking together.

Reason for Medication

- Helps prevent clotting in patients who have had a heart attack, unstable angina, ischemic strokes, TIA (transient ischemic attacks) and other forms of cardiovascular disease.
- Can also be prescribed preventively when plaque buildup is evident but there is not yet a major blockage in the artery.
- Certain patients will be prescribed aspirin combined with another antiplatelet drug – also known as dual antiplatelet therapy (DAPT).

Anticoagulant – (Coumadin, Eliquis) What the Medication Does

Decreases the clotting (coagulating) ability of the blood. Sometimes called blood thinners, although they do not actually thin the blood. They do NOT dissolve existing blood clots. Used to treat certain blood vessel, heart and lung conditions.

Reason for Medication

- Helps to prevent harmful clots from forming in the blood vessels.
- May prevent the clots from becoming larger and causing more serious problems.
- Often prescribed to prevent first or recurrent stroke.

Pulmonary Medications -

Short Acting Bronchodilators– (Albuterol, Atrovent) What the Medication Does

Bronchodilators help open your airways to make breathing easier. Your doctor may prescribe short-acting bronchodilators for an emergency situation or for quick relief as needed.

Reason for Medication

Long Acting Bronchodilators– (Spiriva, Ellipta) What the Medication Does

Long-acting bronchodilators are medications that are used to treat COPD over a longer period of time. They're usually taken once or twice daily using inhalers or nebulizers.

Because these drugs work gradually to help ease breathing, they don't act as quickly as rescue medication. They're not meant to be used in an emergency situation.

Reason for Medication

Corticosteroids – (Flovent, Prednisolone) What the Medication Does

Your airways can be inflamed, causing them to become swollen and irritated. Inflammation makes it harder to breathe. Corticosteroids are a type of medication that reduces inflammation in the body, making air flow easier in the lungs.

Several types of corticosteroids are available. Some are inhalable and should be used every day as directed. They're usually prescribed in combination with a long-acting COPD drug.

Other corticosteroids are injected or taken by mouth. These forms are used on a short-term basis when your COPD suddenly gets worse.

Reason for Medication

Combination Drugs – (Breo Ellipta, Anoro Ellipta, Symbicort, Advair) What the Medication

Does several COPD drugs come as combination medications. These are mainly combinations of either two long-acting bronchodilators or an inhaled corticosteroid and a long-acting bronchodilator.

Triple therapy, a combination of an inhaled corticosteroid and two long-acting bronchodilators, may be used for severe COPD and flare-ups.

Reason for Medication