

## Medications Used After Open Heart Surgery (CABG)

It is important that you take all medications as you have been instructed. Some of these drugs improve survival and some help to prevent or treat chest pain.

**Aspirin** is a medication that decreases the activity of platelets (cells in the blood that cause clotting). This is given to help prevent the formation of blood clots that can block either the graft vessel or other arteries.  
Most common side effects: indigestion, nausea or vomiting, easy bruising.

**Beta blockers** are medications that slow the heart rate, lower blood pressure, and decrease the heart's demand for oxygen.  
Examples of beta-blockers include: metoprolol (Toprol XL or Lopressor), carvedilol (Coreg), nebivolol (Bystolic)  
Most common side effects include: low heart rate, low blood pressure, dizziness, headache, tiredness, cold hands and feet. **Use caution when standing. Get up slowly.**

**ACE inhibitors and ARBs** are medications often used to treat high blood pressure.  
Examples of ACE inhibitors: enalapril (Vasotec), lisinopril (Prinivil/Zestril), ramipril (Altace), benazepril (Lotensin).  
Examples of ARBs: losartan (Hyzaar, Cozaar), valsartan (Diovan), telmisartan (Micardis), olmesartan (Benicar), irbesartan (Avapro)  
Most common side effects include: low blood pressure, dizziness, headache, dry cough, and abnormal taste.

**Lipid lowering therapy** – Almost all patients are given a medication to lower lipids after CABG. Cholesterol lowering can be beneficial both before and after CABG because it can stop the progression of plaque buildup in your arteries and graft vessels.  
Statins are the most common medications used to lower cholesterol levels. Other drugs may be used as well.  
Examples of statins: atorvastatin (Lipitor), lovastatin (Mevacor), pravastatin (Pravachol), rosuvastatin (Crestor), simvastatin (Zocor).  
Examples of non-statins: cholestyramine (Questran), ezetimibe (Zetia).  
Most common side effects include: headache, diarrhea, abdominal pain, flu-like symptoms.  
**Contact your health care provider if you experience:** Severe muscle pain or weakness.

**Pain relievers** may be a part of your early rehab process, allowing you to breathe more deeply and move more comfortably thus loosening your muscles and reducing soreness and pain. Most often, narcotic pain relievers such as hydrocodone (Norco) or Tylenol with codeine are prescribed for up to two weeks after hospital discharge.  
Most common side effects: constipation, dry mouth, itching, drowsiness or tired feeling, headache, dizziness and occasionally hallucinations.

- Do not drink alcohol while taking these medications
- These medications may impair your thinking or reactions. Avoid driving while taking these medications; associated dizziness or drowsiness can cause falls or other accidents.
- Taking these medications with a sleeping pill, other pain medicine, or medicine for anxiety, depression or seizures can cause dangerous interactions, unresponsiveness or even death from slower breathing. Check with your doctor before combining any of these medicines.