

Captopril

Why is this medication prescribed?

This drug belongs to a group of medications called ACE inhibitors. It is used to treat high blood pressure (hypertension). It works by relaxing blood vessels, causing them to widen. Lowering high blood pressure helps prevent strokes, heart attacks and kidney problems

How should this medicine be used?

Take this medication by mouth, usually two to three times a day; or as directed by your doctor. Take this drug on an empty stomach, one hour before a meal.

Use this medication regularly in order to get the most benefit from it. Remember to use it at the same time(s) each day.

Do not take potassium supplements or salt substitutes containing potassium without talking to your doctor or pharmacist first. This medicine can raise your potassium levels, which rarely can cause serious side effects such as muscle weakness or very slow heartbeats.

The dosage is based on your medical condition and response to therapy. For the treatment of high blood pressure, it may take 2 to 4 weeks before the full benefit of this drug occurs or several weeks to months when used for congestive heart failure.

It is important to continue taking this medication even if you feel well. Most people with high blood pressure do not feel sick.

Other uses for this medicine

This medication is also used to improve survival after an acute heart attack, help protect the kidneys from damage due to diabetes, and with other drugs (e.g., "water pills"/diuretics, digoxin) to treat congestive heart failure.

What special precautions should I follow?

Before taking captopril, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or to other ACE inhibitors (e.g., benazepril, lisinopril); or if you have any other allergies (including an allergic reaction after exposure to certain membranes used for blood filtering).

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of: kidney disease, liver disease, high blood levels of potassium, heart problems, severe dehydration (and loss of electrolytes such as sodium), diabetes (poorly

controlled), strokes, blood vessel disease (e.g., collagen vascular diseases such as lupus, scleroderma).

This drug may make you dizzy; use caution engaging in activities requiring alertness such as driving or using machinery

To minimize dizziness and light-headedness due to lowering of your blood pressure, get up slowly when rising from a seated or lying position. Serious loss of body fluids can also lower your blood pressure and worsen dizziness. Drink adequate fluids to prevent from becoming dehydrated. If you are on restricted fluid intake, consult your doctor for further instructions. Be careful not to become too overheated during exercise which can lead to excessive sweating. Consult your doctor if you experience severe vomiting or diarrhea.

This medication may make you more sensitive to the sun. Avoid prolonged sun exposure, tanning booths or sunlamps. Use a sunscreen and wear protective clothing when outdoors.

Before having surgery, tell your doctor or dentist that you are taking this medication.

Caution is advised when using this drug in the elderly because they may be more sensitive to its effects, especially dizziness.

Caution is advised when using this drug in children because they may be more sensitive to certain effects (e.g., excessive or prolonged decrease in blood pressure, change in the amount of urine, seizures).

This medication is not recommended for use during pregnancy due to the risk for harm to an unborn baby. Consult your doctor for more details.

This medication passes into breast milk.

What special dietary instructions should I follow?

Avoid drinking alcohol. It can further lower your blood pressure and may increase some of the side effects of captopril.

Do not use salt substitutes or potassium supplements while taking captopril, unless your doctor has told you to.

What should I do if I forget a dose?

If you miss a dose, use it as soon as you remember. If it is near the time of the next dose, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not double the dose to catch up.

What side effects can this medication cause?

Get emergency medical help if you have any of these signs of an allergic reaction: hives; severe stomach pain; difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Call your doctor at once if you have any of these serious side effects:

- feeling light-headed, fainting;
- urinating more or less than usual, or not at all;
- fever, chills, body aches, flu symptoms;
- pale skin, easy bruising or bleeding;
- fast, pounding, or uneven heartbeats;
- chest pain; or
- swelling, rapid weight gain.

Less serious side effects may be more likely to occur, such as:

- cough;
- loss of taste sensation, loss of appetite;
- dizziness, drowsiness, headache;
- sleep problems (insomnia);
- dry mouth, sores in the mouth or on the lips;
- nausea, diarrhea, constipation; or
- mild skin itching or rash.

What storage conditions are needed for this medicine?

Store at room temperature between 15-30 degrees C away from light and moisture. It is normal for the drug to have a slight sulfur-like odor

In case of emergency/overdose

If overdose is suspected, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

What other information should I know?

Do not use this medication without telling your doctor if you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy. Captopril could cause birth defects in the baby if you take the medication during pregnancy. Use an effective form of birth control. Stop using this medication and tell your doctor right away if you become pregnant during treatment.

Vomiting, diarrhea, or heavy sweating can cause you to become dehydrated. This can lead to very low blood pressure, electrolyte disorders, or kidney failure while you are taking captopril. Drink plenty of water each day while you are taking this medication.



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