



ACE INHIBITORS

A guide for stroke patients

The information in this leaflet is intended for general guidance. If your doctor has given you different advice, follow those instructions.

What are ACE inhibitors?

ACE inhibitors are medicines used to treat high blood pressure, to treat heart failure and to help prevent further problems after a heart attack or a stroke.

Names

Examples of ACE inhibitors are CAPTOPRIL, ENALAPRIL (*Innovace*[®]), FOSINOPRIL, IMIDAPRIL (*Tanatri*[®]), LISINOPRIL (*Zestril*[®]), PERINDOPRIL, QUINAPRIL (*Accupro*[®]), RAMIPRIL (*Tritace*[®]) and TRANDOLAPRIL.

What are ACE inhibitors for?

ACE inhibitors are a type of antihypertensive. Antihypertensives are medicines used to lower blood pressure.

If you have had a stroke or a mini-stroke, taking antihypertensives can reduce your chances of having another one. Many medicines can lower blood pressure. They all work in slightly different ways. You may need more than one medicine to bring your blood pressure down.

How do they work?

ACE inhibitors stop your blood vessels becoming narrower. This allows blood to pass through your blood vessels more easily. Because of this, your heart doesn't have to work as hard to pump blood around your body.

How should I take the medication?

Swallow the number of tablets or capsules prescribed with a glass of water. If you find it difficult to swallow your medication, speak to your doctor or pharmacist.

How will I know if the tablets are working?

You may not notice anything different.

How long will I have to take the tablets for?

Probably for many years. Do not stop taking them unless your doctor tells you to do so.

What if I forget a dose?

Take it as soon as you remember. If it is nearly time for the next dose, miss out the one you forgot. DO NOT double up the dose.

Are there any side effects?

Most medicines can cause side effects. ACE inhibitors may cause dizziness (your doctor will increase the dose slowly and may suggest taking the tablet at bedtime so you don't feel dizzy).

Other possible side effects are a dry cough (some people find that sucking sweets reduces the cough), a high level of potassium in your blood (your doctor should keep a close eye on the level of potassium and other salts in your blood) and kidney problems (your doctor should also monitor this).

Can I have other medicines?

There are some medicines that interact with ACE inhibitors. These include diuretics ("water tablets"), ciclosporin, lithium and potassium salts. Always check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any new medicines or herbal products.

Can I drink alcohol?

Alcohol intake should be kept to a minimum. If in doubt, you should ask your doctor.

How do I find out more?

The information in this leaflet is limited. If you would like more information, see the patient information leaflet provided with your medication. You can also ask your doctor or pharmacist for further information.

For further information phone:

01603 286 286 and ask for the '*Pharmacy Helpline*' between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday.

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