

Heart Failure: Medicines to Avoid

Some medicines can help heart failure. But others can make it worse. That is why it is important to always ask your doctor before you take any new medicine. It's also important to read medicine labels. This includes everything you take without a prescription.

As a rule, don't take medicine that speeds up your heart or has sodium in it.

Over-the-counter medicines

Before you take any medicine or herb, ask your doctor or pharmacist if it is safe. This includes supplements and vitamins. Medicines you need to avoid include:

- Medicines with sodium. Examples include some antacids and laxatives.
- Medicines or herbs with pseudoephedrine. An example is Sudafed.
- Medicines or herbs with oxymetazoline. These include nasal sprays. Two examples are Afrin and Dristan.
- Pain medicines called NSAIDs. These include ibuprofen, such as Advil or Motrin. And they include naproxen, such as Aleve.
- Aspirin. If your doctor has told you to take a low-dose aspirin every day for your heart, follow the doctor's instructions on how much to take. Don't use aspirin for pain. It's better to use acetaminophen, such as Tylenol.
- Certain herbs and vitamins. Examples include black cohosh, St. John's wort, and vitamin E.



Prescription medicines

Make sure every doctor knows that you have heart failure. Before you fill any new prescription, ask the pharmacist if it's okay to take the new drug.

Drugs that can make heart failure worse include:

- Calcium channel blockers. One example is nifedipine. These treat high blood pressure. They also treat some types of heart disease.
- Antiarrhythmics. One example is flecainide. These treat a fast or uneven heartbeat.
- Pain relievers. These include celecoxib and diclofenac.
- Some diabetes medicines. These include pioglitazone, rosiglitazone, and saxagliptin.



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