

BLOOD PRESSURE MEDICINES

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HOW DO THEY WORK?

There are many different "classes" of blood pressure medicines used to treat high blood pressure (hypertension). You can think of "classes" like different things you write with: pens, pencils, crayons, or markers. They all allow you to write, just in different ways. This is similar to how classes of blood pressure medications work to lower your blood pressure, just in different ways. These medicines have to be prescribed carefully to find out what works best for each patient.

THE CLASSES



DIURETICS

help the body get rid of excess salt and water, which help control blood pressure. These are sometimes called "water pills".

ACE INHIBITORS

help the body make less of a chemical called "Angiotensin". With less angiotensin, blood vessels relax and open up which lowers blood pressure.

ANGIOTENSIN II RECEPTOR BLOCKERS

block the action of Angiotensin. Blood vessels stay open which lowers blood pressure.

CALCIUM CHANNEL BLOCKERS

prevent calcium from entering muscle cells in the heart and arteries. These allow blood vessels to relax, lower heart rate, and lower blood pressure.

BETA BLOCKERS

Lower the heart rate. Since the heart is beating slower, it doesn't have to work as hard, which lowers blood pressure.

ALPHA BLOCKERS

Lower the resistance in arteries, relaxing the muscle of blood vessel walls.

ALPHA-2 RECEPTOR AGONISTS

Decrease the activity of the part of the nervous system that acts without our control to "fight or flight". In other words, it decreases adrenaline.

COMBINED ALPHA AND BETA BLOCKERS

Given to patients through their veins (through an "IV"). These are used when blood pressure is so high that it is causing immediate damage to their body, called "hypertensive crisis". These are also sometimes used, not in an IV, for heart failure.

VASODILATORS

Relax the muscle in the walls of blood vessels which allows blood to flow through better and lowers blood pressure.

SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.HEART.ORG/EN/HEALTH-TOPICS/HIGH-BLOOD-PRESSURE/CHANGES-YOU-CAN-MAKE-TO-MANAGE-HIGH-BLOOD-PRESSURE/TYPES-OF-BLOOD-PRESSURE-MEDICATIONS](https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure/changes-you-can-make-to-manage-high-blood-pressure/types-of-blood-pressure-medications)

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