

Heart Failure Medicine Tips to Remember



MY ACTION PLAN FOR HEART FAILURE • [CardioSmart.org](https://www.cardiosmart.org)



- **Learn about your medications.** Be sure you understand why you are taking each medication, how each one works and possible side effects.
- **Always take your medications exactly as prescribed.** Do not skip a dose, stop or make changes to a medication without talking with your care team.
- **Know what to do if you miss a dose.** Talk with your health care team about what to do. In general, take a missed dose as soon as you remember; if it's very close to when you take the next dose, it's often recommended to skip the missed dose.
- **Come up with a consistent schedule for taking your medications.** For example, at a certain time of day and with food, if needed. Setting reminders with an alarm on your phone or using a pillbox can be helpful.
- **The dose or amount of the medication you start with may need to be adjusted over time – even when you are feeling good.** You will usually start with low doses to make sure your body can tolerate the medication. The amount will then be increased to what has been shown to be helpful to patients in clinical trials. These adjustments (called titrating) will be done little by little to see how you are feeling and whether you are having any side effects.

For example, when first starting a beta blocker, many people say they feel sluggish and tired, but over time people tend to feel better. Changes can often be made to help manage or avoid side effects, so it is important to check in.

- **Certain medications can make heart failure worse.** Some examples are nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) or naproxen (Aleve) and calcium channel blockers (verapamil or diltiazem). Certain antacids and cough medicines also have sodium.
- **Refill prescriptions before they run out.** Ask your pharmacist if you can:
 - Automate refills
 - Get all of your medications on roughly the same schedule to make reordering easier
- **Share any worries with your care team.** For example, about how and when you should take your medications, how to afford them or concerns about side effects.