Other Blood Pressure modifiers

Examples: Hydralzine and Minipres

How They Work: Hydralazine and Minipres works by directly opening up the blood vessels as a vasodilator. It decreases resistance and thereby decreases blood pressure, the diastolic usually more than the systolic.

Side Effects: The major problems with hydralazine and minipres are the effects due as a direct result of the drugs' effects on blood pressure. They may cause a reflex tachycardia (fast heart rate) and may cause some added edema or fluid retention. Some of these effects are seen when standing up abruptly. Rarely, Hydralazine may cause some symptoms that look like lupus erythematosus or rheumatoid arthritis. That problem may be reversed by stopping the drug but may require other medication to ameliorate the new symptoms.

Examples: Clonidine

How It Works: Clonidine works by stimulating alpha-2-receptors in the brain. This is a false signal and makes the brain think that there are more catecholamines (adrenaline like) than there really are and in turn that decreases the production of catecholamines in the adrenal gland. It has been used to prevent some of the side effects or opiate withdrawal.

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Other Cholesterol Medications

Examples: Zetia

How It Works: Lowers the LDL by decreasing the absorption of cholesterol by the small intestine.

Side Effects: Diarrhea

Examples: Niaspan

How It Works: We are not too sure how niaspan works but it may decrease the release of fatty acids from fat cells. Niaspan is effective in lowering triglycerides and increasing HDL.

Side Effects: Include flushing which can be minimized if you take the medication with food or if you take an aspirin about an hour prior to ingesting the drug.

Examples: Whelchol

How It Works: The medication does not get absorbed but goes into the intestine and it binds with bile acids and then the bile acids are excreted. Because bile acids are made from cholesterol, the body theoretically must use up the bad cholesterol to replace the bile acids hence lowering the total amount of bad cholesterol.

Side Effects: Diarrhea – but the good news that you don't have to monitor liver enzymes because it doesn't get absorbed.

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Other Cholesterol Medications

What is a Heart Attack? a Stroke?
A heart attack is an event that marks heart cell death. A stroke is an event that marks brain cell death. The most common cause of a heart attack or stroke is the blockage of a blood vessel that inhibits the opportunity for oxygen to get to the body's cells. Oxygen is absolutely necessary for a cell to live. Most cells can live for several minutes without oxygen but after those minutes have passed, the ability of a cell to maintain its integrity is reduced and the cellular wall breaks down. Once this happens the intracellular enzymes escape. We can actually measure those enzymes and measure the degree of cellular death.

If a large enough area of heart muscle dies, the heart doesn't function well as a pump and the body is further compromised because other organ systems are compromised of oxygen. Similarly, depending upon which area of the brain is deprived of oxygen, a particular brain function is gone. This may result in the inability to think, speak, or move a particular body part.

Clearly, heart attacks and strokes are two of the most severe forms of disease and result in significant dysfunction. This is why their prevention is the center of so much health care discussion and technology.

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What is High Blood Pressure? Blood pressure is a measurement of the pressure inside the blood vessel. The pressure is created by the flow of blood. The top number is called systolic pressure and is a direct reflection of the push that the heart muscle creates with each contraction. The lower number is called the diastolic pressure and reflects the pressure in between beats.

A good blood pressure for an adult is a systolic less than 140 and a diastolic pressure less than 80. In general, the lower the pressure the better, unless, of course you are dizzy. The opposite is also true. The higher your blood pressure, the greater your risk for stroke, heart attack, or kidney disease and the greater the work the heart must perform. The rule of thumb is the lower the better.

When blood pressure is high, you might have a headache, feel dizzy, have chest pain, or have problems with vision. More often then not, high blood pressure causes no symptoms, therefore the name... the silent killer. Long-term hypertension is a major risk factor for atherosclerosis and all the medical problems that result. It is often inherited but can be made worse by poor lifestyle choices.

It follows that you can improve your blood pressure with weight loss, exercise, low salt diets, and by lowering the stress in your life. Blood pressure naturally goes up with age.

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