

Other Blood Pressure modifiers



Examples: Hydralazine 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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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 than 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.