

Take Your Medicine

When are medications the right course of therapy for a heart patient?

Some medications are almost always indicated for patients with blockages or CAD. We give medicines to both prevent a heart attack and after a patient has had a heart attack. Some of these medications are started immediately after a heart attack and continued indefinitely so we can prevent another stroke or heart attack down the road.

What are some common medicines used to reduce risk factors?

In general, there are four types of medications we use:

- Anti-platelet drugs (aspirin, Plavix, Brilinta). These prevent blood from clotting too much.
- Cholesterol medicines, usually statins (Lipitor, Crestor, Zocor). These reduce the plaque in the artery that leads to blockage.
- Blood pressure medicines to keep blood pressure in the 120/80 range.
- Beta blockers to prevent a heart rhythm issue.

How do you make the choice of medications?

Usually, the choice of medications is a discussion between you and your doctor to decide which are best for you and your condition. You may also discuss what you can afford and which ones will give you the best outcome. Most importantly, medications are effective only if you follow the recommended doses and timing of taking them.

When is it okay to take a generic drug?

In most cases, generic drugs have the same effect as name brand drugs. However, there are some exceptions, especially with some of the newer medications that have shown benefit. Be sure to discuss these options with your doctor.

Are there any cost saving tips for buying medications?

We recommend patients download the Good Rx app and see how much the medications would cost regardless of insurance. It can be eye opening. Sometimes pills can be split which can lead to a cost savings, especially if the medication may be increased over time so you do not have to spend money on another prescription.