

# Aldosterone Blockers

A group of medications also called aldosterone inhibitors or aldosterone antagonists.

## Most common Aldosterone Blockers

Ask your health care provider to check off the one you are taking.

Spironolactone (Aldactone)

Eplerenone (Inspra)

## What are Aldosterone Blockers?

Aldosterone is a steroid hormone that helps your kidneys control the amount of sodium, potassium, and water in your body. Aldosterone blockers have two actions. By blocking this hormone:

- Your kidneys hold onto more potassium.
- Your kidneys get rid of more salt (sodium) and water by increasing how much you urinate ('pee').

## What are Aldosterone Blockers used for?

- Heart failure
- High blood pressure
- Other health problems that cause fluid to build-up in the body

## How do Aldosterone Blockers help with heart failure?

- Less water in your body lowers your blood pressure so your heart doesn't have to work as hard
- Decreases your shortness of breath
- Decreases swelling in your legs and bloating in your stomach
- Could prevent you from needing treatment for heart failure in the hospital

## What if you miss taking a dose?

If it is almost time for your next dose, skip taking the dose you missed and just take your next scheduled dose.

Never take two doses at the same time.

If you have questions about taking your medications, or missed doses, contact your pharmacist, your health care provider. In British Columbia, you can also call 8-1-1.

## Do not take any of the following without checking with your health care provider

- Potassium supplements
- Salt substitutes
- Alcohol
- Cough or cold medicines
- Black licorice
- Herbal products
- Chinese medicines
- Anti-inflammatory medicines (such as Advil, Ibuprofen, Motrin, Naproxen, Aleve, Celebrex)
- Other medicines you can buy at a pharmacy without a prescription

## Health Care Provider contact information

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To learn more about Aldosterone Blockers, go to the HealthLinkBC web site ([www.healthlinkbc.ca](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca)) or call 8-1-1.

## Common Side Effects

**Always tell your health care provider if you have any side effects.**

- High levels of potassium in your blood
- Urinating or going pee too often
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Dehydration (when you have lost too much fluid)
- You may be dehydrated if you:
  - Lose more than 4 lbs in 2 days or 5 lbs in a week.
  - Have a really dry mouth.
  - Are very thirsty.
  - Are extremely dizzy.
  - Your urine (pee) is a really dark-colour.

- Feeling sick to your stomach (nauseated)
- Not having an appetite
- Headache
- Muscle cramps
- For men: Breast tenderness  
Enlarged breasts

### Less common side effects

- Rash
- Menstrual irregularities and breast tenderness in women

**Contact your health care provider right away if side effects do not go away or get worse.**

## Medication Tips

♥ While taking an aldosterone blocker, weigh yourself every day and record your weight.

- Call your health care provider if you gain more than 4 lbs (2 kg) in 2 days or 5 lbs (2.5 kg) in 1 week.

♥ Do not drink more than 1½ to 2 litres of fluid each day. 1½ - 2.0 litres = 48 - 64 ounces = 6 - 8 glasses (Refer to [Limiting Fluid resource](#) to learn more)

♥ To keep from feeling sick to your stomach, eat food right before or after taking the medication.

♥ Do not take potassium supplements or eat foods high in potassium such as dried fruit, potatoes, orange juice, bananas, and avocados.

(To learn more about potassium in food refer to the patient education resource)

♥ Your health care provider might arrange for regular blood tests to check your potassium and sodium levels, and kidney function.

♥ Always check with your health care provider before you stop taking your aldosterone blocker. If you stop taking this medication, your heart failure could get worse.

♥ Always tell your health care provider if you are taking high blood pressure medications, digoxin, anti inflammatory medication, or steroids such as cortisone.

♥ Always tell your health care provider if you have diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease, or gout.

♥ If you have low blood pressure, do not do anything that can lower your blood pressure even more.

- ✗ Do not drink alcohol.
- ✗ Do not take really hot showers or baths, use a hot tub

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This handout is based on patient education materials originally co-created by Cardiac Services BC and the BC Heart Failure Network in 2012.