

Amiodarone (Cordarone ®)

What is Amiodarone?

- ♥ Amiodarone is a member of a group of medications called “anti-arrhythmics” that help the heart beat regularly.
- ♥ Your heart has an electrical system made up of cells that are sometimes disorganized causing irregular heartbeats.
- ♥ Amiodarone works to keep you safe by controlling these heartbeats and stabilizing the system.

How does amiodarone help with abnormal or irregular heartbeats?

- ♥ It changes or “converts” your irregular heartbeat to a regular one, also called sinus (normal) rhythm.
- ♥ Amiodarone reduces:
 - The number of times you have an irregular heartbeat
 - The length of time an irregular heartbeat lasts
 - Heart rate
- ♥ It helps to make you feel better by reducing the symptoms of an irregular heartbeat.

Did You Know?

It can take several weeks before you notice your heart rhythm improving and you are feeling better.



How should I take my amiodarone?

- ♥ Take amiodarone as instructed by your health care provider. Do not stop taking amiodarone without instruction.
- ♥ Amiodarone taken with food or milk can help prevent stomach upset.
- ♥ When taken for a long period of time, regular blood work is needed. Speak with your health care provider about what is needed.
- ♥ Your dose may change frequently during the first few weeks. The medication needs to build-up in your body before it starts to work.

What if I miss taking a dose?

- ♥ If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the dose you missed and 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 or your health care provider. In British Columbia, you can also call 8-1-1.

Check with your pharmacist/health care provider before taking any of the following:

- Cough/cold medicines
- Vitamins or supplements
- Herbal or naturopathic remedies
- Traditional Chinese medicines
- Grapefruit/grapefruit juice
- Other “over-the-counter” medicines you can buy



Common Side Effects

It is important to talk with your health care provider about side effects and how best to deal with them. Most will improve with time. Contact your health care provider if any of these side effects do not go away or get worse.

Nausea, constipation	Trouble sleeping
Dizziness/light-headedness	Headache
Dry eyes	Sun Sensitivity

Medication Tips

♥ Your skin can become more sensitive to the sun. Use a sunscreen (SPF 50+) all year round. Avoid the sun or wear protective clothing, a hat and eyewear outdoors. Don't use sun lamps, tanning beds or booths.



♥ You may have dry eyes while taking amiodarone. Check with your health care provider to see if using artificial tears is right for you.

♥ Amiodarone can sometimes interact with medications taken for other health conditions.

♥ Medications that are known to interact with Amiodarone include:

- Warfarin (blood thinner)
- Digoxin (lowers heart rate)
- "Statins" (lowers cholesterol)



♥ Your health care provider may need to adjust doses to ensure all your medications are safe and effective.

♥ Check with your pharmacist before starting any new medication.

♥ Contact your health care provider if you have any of the following:

- Shortness of breath
- Dry cough that doesn't go away
- Blue-grey colouring of your skin
- Numbness in your fingers or toes
- Skin rash
- Trembling hands
- Fainting
- New or worsening feelings of a fast-beating, or pounding heart
- Vision problems
- Yellowing of skin or eyes

♥ Alcohol can impact both your medications and your health condition. Speak to your care provider about alcohol use.

Health Provider contact information

To learn more about amiodarone, go to the HealthLinkBC web site (www.healthlinkbc.ca) or call 8-1-1.

