

Aldosterone Antagonists

(Potassium Sparing Diuretics)

Spironolactone (Aldactone®)

Eplerenone (Inspra®)

Pharmacy Services

This is intended as a general reference.

It does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.



What are aldosterone antagonists used for?

We use this type of medicine for any of these reasons:

- To improve heart function
- To improve symptoms of heart failure
- To get rid of excess fluid (“weak” water pill)

If you have heart failure, your heart might not pump blood around the body as well as it normally would.

Heart failure can lead to fluid collecting in the lungs (causing shortness of breath) and tissues (causing swelling or edema). When used with other water pills, aldosterone antagonists can help reduce the excess fluid in the lungs and tissues by increasing the amount of salt and water your kidneys remove. This medication does not lower your body’s potassium level, which is why it is called “potassium sparing”.

Why should I take this medication?

When taken by people with heart failure, studies have shown that aldosterone antagonists can improve symptoms of heart failure and long-term health.

This medication might also reduce the chances of you experiencing a serious or life-threatening complication from the heart failure.

What should I expect?

You should notice an improvement in your symptoms within a few days of starting this medication.

How do aldosterone antagonists work?

Aldosterone is a hormone and naturally produced in the body. Your body uses this hormone to raise your blood pressure when needed. It does this by causing your kidneys to retain salt and water. We don't want this if you already have high blood pressure or are retaining excess fluid.

Aldosterone antagonists block the hormone from working, helping to lower your blood pressure and get rid of excess fluid in your urine (pee). These medications also reduce heart muscle scarring after injury or from ongoing stress to the heart.

How do I take aldosterone antagonists?

- You might find you have to go to the bathroom more often within the few hours after taking the medication. Because of this it is best to take it in the morning.
- It is also best to take the medication at the same time each day so you don't miss a dose.
- If you do miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If you remember the next day or close to the time of your next dose, just take your next scheduled dose.
Do not double the dose to make up for the missed dose.
- **Do not** stop taking this medication or adjust your dose without first talking to your healthcare provider.

What should I watch for?

Most people tolerate aldosterone antagonists well.

Some side effects to watch for include:

- feeling lightheaded or dizzy
- tired all the time
- muscle cramps
- urinating (peeing) more
- tenderness in the breast area

Contact your pharmacist or doctor if any side effects become bothersome or get worse.

You might need to go for blood tests to make sure your body levels of salt, potassium, and other electrolytes remain normal.

Other helpful points

Some substances can interact with this medication. Check with your pharmacist or doctor before starting new medications or supplements, including herbal medicines, and alternative and natural products.

Some medications should not be taken during pregnancy. Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.