



LIVING WITH CHRONIC HEART FAILURE

Side effects may occur from your heart failure medications or from taking multiple medications at the same time.

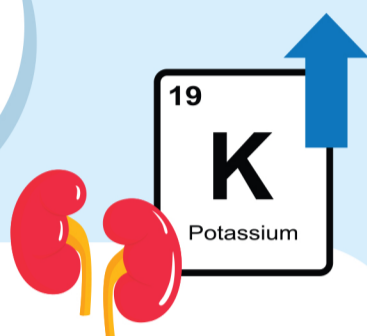


Taking your medications is important as it helps to slow down the progression of Heart Failure. This will enable you to do the things you like and spend more time with your loved ones. Some of the most common side effects and how to manage them are as follows³:



Hypotension, headache, or dizziness

- Slowly get up from lying / sitting position.
- Consult your Doctor to review your medications and for possible use of compression stockings.



Increase of potassium level

- Avoid potassium rich food (e.g. banana, beans, lentils, potatoes) and avoid potassium supplements



Nausea

- Try to eat smaller meals throughout the day.
- Get some fresh air and keep your house ventilated.
- Avoid fried food where possible.
- Avoid lying down immediately after eating.
- Consult your Doctor on the best time to take your medications.



Other side effects from HF medication include **dry cough, slow heartbeat, cold hands and feet, tiredness, and increase in serum creatinine/BUN**

! Do not stop medication on your own & consult your doctor if you experience any side effects



Polypharmacy in Heart Failure

As a patient with heart failure (HF), you may need to regularly take **multiple medicines**²



Studies show that most **older adults (~90%)** with HF have at least **3 other medical conditions**.³



HF patients often need to take **5 or more medicines**, termed '**polypharmacy**'⁴



Tips for managing Polypharmacy:



1. Let your Doctor know ALL the medications you are taking for ALL your medical conditions.



2. Ask your Doctor / Pharmacist to develop a **Best Possible Medication List (BPML)** with the scheduled doses.

Ensure there will be no Drug-Drug / Drug-food interaction. Keep the list with you at all times.



3. Be mindful to take the right dose at the right time – follow your Doctor's instructions.



4. Utilize tools e.g. pill boxes with day indications or create a daily medication list with checkboxes.

Indicate with a tick after you take each medication.

! Inform your Doctor if you experience any side effects.



Reporting helps to improve the safety of medicines for all patients. This information help prescribers understand the risks and benefits of medicines to make better medicine choices with their patients.⁵

The advice provided should not replace that of Healthcare Professionals.

References:

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4. Beezer J, Al Hatrushi M, Husband A, Kurdi A Forsyth P. Polypharmacy definition and prevalence in Heart Failure: a systematic review. Heart Failure Rev. 2021;1-28.
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