

**MEDICATIONS AFTER HOSPITALIZATION FOR ACUTE CORONARY  
SYNDROME OR HEART ATTACK**

**PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET**

**What are the benefits of taking prescribed medications after a heart attack?**

After a heart attack, certain medications are known to help prevent or control coronary heart disease (CHD) and reduce the risk of having another heart attack. Medications are most effective when taken as prescribed and accompanied by heart healthy lifestyle changes. Your physician will decide which medications will be best for you.

**Which medications are most commonly prescribed after a heart attack?**

1. **Aspirin** is known to prevent future heart attacks and to reduce the risk of heart attacks or sudden death in individuals with unstable angina or chest pain. In some circumstances, Aspirin is used after certain revascularization procedures such as angioplasty, and coronary bypass surgery. Aspirin works by thinning the blood and may prevent dangerous clots from forming and causing another heart attack or a stroke.
2. **ACE inhibitors** are known to prolong survival after a heart attack and to prevent future heart attacks. ACE inhibitors work by preventing the activation of a chemical in the blood that causes blood vessels to narrow and tighten. As a result, ACE inhibitors reduce blood pressure and make it easier for the heart to pump blood.
3. **Beta blockers** are known to prolong survival after a heart attack. Beta blockers work by slowing down the heart rate, reducing the force with which the heart contracts, lowering blood pressure, and reducing the work load of the heart.
4. **Cholesterol lowering medications** are known to reduce the level of “bad cholesterol” or Low Density Lipoproteins (LDL) in the blood. As a result, these medications may reduce the risk of future heart attacks.
5. **Nitroglycerin** reduces anginal pain or chest pain by relaxing the blood vessels around the heart and improving blood flow to the heart muscle. Nitroglycerine may be prescribed as a sublingual tablet that is placed under the tongue or as an oral spray.

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