

## Heart Failure: Medicines to Avoid



Some medicines can help heart failure. But others can make heart failure worse. Even over-the-counter medicines or herbal products can cause harm. As a rule, don't take medicine that speeds up your heart or has sodium in it.

**Always** ask your doctor before you take any new medicine.

### Over-the-counter medicines

You may need to avoid:

- Medicines that contain sodium, such as some antacids and some laxatives.
- Medicines or herbal products that contain pseudoephedrine (Sudafed), ephedrine (ma huang, Herbalife), or oxymetazoline (nasal sprays such as Afrin and Dristan).
- Pain medicines called NSAIDs, which include aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve). If your doctor has told you to take a low-dose aspirin every day for

your heart problems, it's probably okay to take it. But higher doses of aspirin may make your heart failure worse. Do not take aspirin for pain. Use acetaminophen, such as Tylenol, instead.

### Prescription medicines

If any doctor prescribes these medicines for you, make sure he or she knows that you have heart failure. Talk to your primary care doctor or heart specialist before you take these:

- Calcium channel blockers (such as diltiazem and verapamil), which are used to treat some types of heart disease, such as chest pain and heart rhythm problems
- Antiarrhythmics (such as flecainide and quinidine), which are used to treat a fast or uneven heart rhythm
- Pain relievers, such as celecoxib and ketoprofen
- Antibiotics
- Some diabetes medicines

### Questions to ask your doctor

Use the space below to list your questions or concerns. Take this sheet with you to your next doctor visit.

#### Questions about medicines to avoid:

