

# Cardiology Medication

**This leaflet explains more about the medications you may receive following a heart attack. These medicines all work together to reduce the risk of further cardiac events.**

**If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.**

## ACE Inhibitors (ACEI)

**Regulates blood pressure and reduces the workload on the heart**

### Enalapril, Lisinopril, Perindopril, Ramipril

- The dose will be gradually increased at follow up appointments to the maximum tolerated dose to provide the best preventative effect
- St George's commonly prescribes Ramipril 1.25 - 2.5mg daily
- Benefits
  - Reduces risk of heart attacks
  - Treats and prevents heart failure
  - Controls blood pressure
  - Protects kidneys – especially good for diabetic patients
- Side effects
  - Low blood pressure especially when first taken.

- This medicine may affect kidney function, this will be monitored via blood tests at follow up appointments
- Persistent dry cough (can affect up to 10% patients)
- Alternatives - Angiotensin II receptor antagonists
- Losartan, Candesartan, Valsartan
- Allergic reaction - lip swelling, rash, dizziness, vertigo

## **BETA BLOCKERS**

**Beta blockers regulate the heart RATE and reduce demand for blood and oxygen**

### **Atenolol, Bisoprolol, Carvedilol, Metoprolol, Sotalol**

- The dose will be gradually increased at follow up appointments to the maximum tolerated dose to provide the best preventative effect
- St George's commonly prescribes Bisoprolol 1.25 - 2.5mg daily
- Benefits
  - Lowers Heart Rate and BP
  - Prevents irregular beats and angina
  - Slows development of heart failure
  - Prevents heart attacks
- Side Effects
  - Tiredness, Cold hands/feet, Disturbed sleep, shortness of breath
- May cause a wheeze or shortness of breath in severe asthmatics, but tolerance will be monitored and assessed during inpatient stay

# ANTIPLATELETS

Thins the blood to prevent the formation of blood clots

## ASPIRIN

- Dose
  - 75mg tablet once a day with/after food
- Side Effects
  - Stomach irritation or indigestion
  - More likely to bruise or bleed
- Dispersible Aspirin – Can be dissolved in water or swallowed whole

## CLOPIDOGREL

- Dose
  - 75mg once a day with/after food (sometimes taken with Aspirin)
- Usually up to 12 months in combination with Aspirin post heart attack and some cardiac surgeries.
- Side Effects
  - Bleeding, stomach irritation, diarrhea
  - Indigestion

## TICAGRELOR

- Dose
  - 90mg twice a day with/after food
- Usually up to 12 months in combination with aspirin
- Alternative to Clopidogrel/ Prasugrel

- Side Effects
  - Shortness of breath, Bleeding, Gastrointestinal side effects including nausea, diarrhea

## Cholesterol lowering medication

They reduce the amount of cholesterol that is produced by the liver. High levels of cholesterol make arteries narrow which leads to heart attacks.

### Atorvastatin, Fluvastatin, Pravastatin, Rosuvastatin, Simvastatin

- St George's commonly prescribes Atorvastatin 80mg daily
- Atorvastatin and Rosuvastatin can be taken anytime of the day,
  - All the other statins should be taken at night.
- Side Effects
  - Stomach problems
  - Can affect Liver - Liver Function Tests every 3-6 months
  - Muscles aches, pains, tenderness
  - **Speak to GP if this develops**
- Avoid grapefruit/grapefruit juice
- Other cholesterol lowering medications:
  - Fibrates (e.g., Fenofibrate, Bezafibrate)
  - Omega-3-fatty acids (Omacor)
  - Ezetimibe

## **STOMACH PROTECTION**

**Used to protect the stomach from irritation or indigestion caused by antiplatelets/anticoagulants**

### **Proton Pump Inhibitor (PPI) - Lansoprazole, Omeprazole**

- St George's commonly prescribes Lansoprazole 30mg Daily
- Discuss with GP once you are only on a single antiplatelet to determine if it is suitable to stop the stomach protection.
- Side effects
  - Dizziness
  - Headache
  - Stomach discomfort, Nausea

## **NITRATES**

**Improve blood and oxygen flow to the heart muscles to stop chest pain during angina attack**

### **Glyceryl Trinitrate Spray (GTN)**

- Sit down before using the spray as it may cause light headedness.
- Dose
  - One - two sprays under the tongue at 5-minute intervals up to a maximum of TWO times.
- Dial 999 if no relief after the third spray
- Close mouth in between sprays.
- Side effects

- Dizziness, Light headedness
- Headache
- Always have it close by
- Ensure to regularly check it is still in date.
- Discuss with GP if the frequency of use increases

## Glossary

**Secondary Prevention** - Secondary prevention aims to reduce the impact of a disease or injury that has already occurred. The medications being given after a cardiac event are preventative in nature to prevent reinjury or recurrence.

**Dual Antiplatelet Therapy (DAPT)** - Combined therapy with two antiplatelet medications. Typically given for a period of 12 months after heart attacks, then stepped down to a single antiplatelet.

**Myocardial Infarction (MI)** - A Heart attack is a serious medical emergency in which the supply of blood to the heart is suddenly blocked, usually by a blood clot.

**Ischaemic Heart Disease (IHD)** - ischemic heart disease, also called coronary heart disease (CHD) or coronary artery disease, is the term given to heart problems caused by narrowed heart (coronary) arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle.

**ST - segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI)** - An ST segment elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) is

the most serious form of heart attack and requires emergency assessment and treatment.

**Non-ST segment elevation myocardial infarction (NSTEMI)** - If an ECG shows you have an NSTEMI or unstable angina (the "less serious" types of heart attack), blood-thinning medicine, including aspirin and other medicines, is usually recommended.

**Primary percutaneous Intervention (PCI)** - PCI is the term for emergency treatment of a STEMI. It's a procedure to widen the coronary artery

**Coronary artery bypass graft (CABG)** - A CABG involves taking a blood vessel from another part of your body (usually your chest, leg or arm) and attaching it to your coronary artery above and below the narrowed area or blockage. This new blood vessel is known as a graft.

**Drug Eluting Stent (DES)** - A stent is a small mesh tube put into an artery to keep it open. A drug-eluting stent is coated with a slow-release medication to help prevent blood clots from forming in a stent.

## Contact us

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments, and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)

**If you are experiencing side effects and are concerned, please speak to your GP.**

## **Additional services**

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### **NHS Choices**

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### **NHS 111**

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111

### **AccessAble**

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website ([www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)).

The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

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