

Common Medications Taken During Hemodialysis



UHN

For hemodialysis patients

Read this pamphlet to learn more about some common medications you may be taking during hemodialysis and how they work.

Medication	What it is for
Red Blood Cell Stimulating Agents	<p>The kidneys help to make red blood cells in the body. When you are on dialysis, it means your kidneys are not working well enough to make red blood cells.</p> <p>The medications that help make red blood cells are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darbepoetin (Aranesp®) Given once a week during hemodialysis • Erythropoietin (Eprex®) Given 3 times a week during hemodialysis <p>Some hemodialysis patients make enough red blood cells, so not all patients need to receive this medication.</p>

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Iron	<p>Many patients coming to dialysis have low iron. The doctor often prescribes iron sucrose (Venofer®) to patients who are starting dialysis. It replaces the iron in the body.</p> <p>It is given during each treatment through the dialysis machine into your bloodstream for the first 4 weeks, then 1 or 2 times a month after that.</p>
Blood Pressure Medications	<p>High blood pressure</p> <p>Fluids can build up between dialysis sessions causing high blood pressure. If blood pressure stays high for a long time, you have a higher chance of developing heart disease, or having a heart attack or stroke.</p> <p>There are many different medications that can help to control blood pressure. Your nephrologist will find the right medications that work for you.</p> <p>Some non-prescription cold or allergy medications have ingredients that can raise blood pressure. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you take medications.</p> <p>Low blood pressure</p> <p>Some patients have low blood pressure during dialysis. Your doctor may ask you not to take these medications before coming to dialysis. We will check your blood pressure during each dialysis session to make sure your blood pressure is under control.</p>

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Phosphate Binders	<p>One of the biggest problems facing dialysis patients is the build-up of phosphate in the blood. You can control this problem by eating a low phosphate diet. A dietitian can help you choose healthy low phosphate foods, such as fruits, white bread and non-dairy products.</p> <p>Medications called phosphate binders also help with the build-up of phosphate in the blood. They bind dietary phosphate in the gut and prevent it from being absorbed.</p> <p>The most common medication is calcium carbonate. It must be taken at the beginning of each meal.</p> <p>If your calcium levels also become too high, or if calcium carbonate doesn't work well, your doctor can also prescribe lanthanum carbonate (Fosrenol®) or sevelamer (Renagel®).</p>
Vitamins B and C (Replavite®)	<p>Some vitamin B and C are lost during dialysis. The multivitamin called Replavite® provides these vitamins. Take Replavite® after dialysis for best results.</p>
Calcitriol (Rocaltrol®)	<p>The kidneys convert Vitamin D to its active form that helps the body absorb and use calcium. Because the kidneys are not working as well, many patients on hemodialysis do not have enough of the active form of Vitamin D.</p> <p>Calcitriol is the active form of vitamin D. Your doctor may prescribe calcitriol to increase calcium levels in the blood, which keeps bones healthy.</p> <p>Calcitriol may also be prescribed to help lower blood levels of parathyroid hormone, which is often increased when someone is on hemodialysis.</p>

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Antibiotics	<p>Antibiotics are medicines used to treat or prevent an infection.</p> <p>For patients on hemodialysis, antibiotics can build up because the kidney isn't able to fully remove them from the body.</p> <p>Tell your doctor and pharmacist that you are on dialysis when being prescribed antibiotics. Also, please let the dialysis staff know when you start taking antibiotics that other doctors have prescribed.</p>
Cinacalcet (Sensipar®)	<p>Some patients on hemodialysis have increased parathyroid hormone levels.</p> <p>If your hormone levels are high for a long time, this can lead to bone disease.</p> <p>First we use Calcitriol to lower the hormone. If Calcitriol does not lower your parathyroid hormone levels, then your doctor may prescribe a medication called cinacalcet.</p>
Uremol® Cream	<p>Some patients on dialysis become very itchy. This happens because substances build up in the body that were normally removed by the kidneys.</p> <p>Uremol® cream can help treat the itch. If the itch doesn't go away, talk to a member of your health care team.</p>

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