

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Heart Medications
- Medication List
- Jerk Seasoning
- New Defibrillator



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## Do I really need these Medications?

Yes. You do. This article will take a brief look at the most common classes of heart medications and explain why you need them if you have certain heart problems. Let's tackle the biggest one first. The drug class of statins, also known as cholesterol medications. In patients with a known history of coronary artery disease, statins can reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke, need for cardiac revascularization (stent, angioplasty) and death by 20-30 percent. This has been demonstrated over the last twenty years in numerous large studies. So...its not just for cholesterol. (3).

Next. Blood thinners. There are several blood thinners that serve different purposes. Many individuals do not mind being on aspirin or even Plavix. It is when they hear the word Coumadin that they go into orbit. Atrial fibrilla-

tion is the most common reason people may need Coumadin or one of the new blood thinners (Pradaxa, Xarelto, or Eliquis). These medications are used to decrease the risk of strokes and blood clots in individuals that suffer



from atrial fibrillation. In some people, aspirin is enough. These individuals are usually younger and do not have other health problems. However, many people with atrial fibrillation are older and have high blood pressure, heart failure, diabetes and other disease

processes that significantly increases the risk of stroke. In 5 large trials, the average risk of stroke in people with atrial fibrillation was 4.5 percent per year. Coumadin reduced the risk to 1.4 percent per year or 68 percent risk reduction. Aspirin, alone produces a risk reduction of 44 percent. The newer blood thinners are at least as good as Coumadin at protecting against stroke. However, they have less chance of bleeding in the brain. For Coumadin, this is around 1 percent. The newer drugs is around 0.5 percent or less. Something to think about. (2,4,5).

Lastly are the beta blockers and ace inhibitors. These are two medications that are used very commonly together to treat congestive heart failure. Both drugs are also used to treat high blood pressure. However, they have other properties that significantly improve outcomes in people with heart failure whose ejection fraction is 40 percent or less. (2).

### Tip of the Month

Tips to keep up with your Medications:

1. **Keep an accurate List** (This is an example of a medication list from myhearthelp.com)
2. **Know why you are taking the Medication** (Is it for high blood pressure or to control your bladder?)
3. **Know when and who started the Medications** (This is important for refills but also may help your medical providers as well.)
4. **Keep extra copies of the list with family members**
5. **Keep a list of medications that you were allergic or intolerant to** (write down the side effect)

Drug Name	Dosage	Frequency	Route	Date started	Reason for taking	Prescribed by
enalapril	2.5mg	twice daily	mouth	1/2/12	high blood pressure	dr smith
lasix	20mg	once daily	mouth	2/2/2010	swelling	dr smith
coreg	25mg	twice daily	mouth	1/5/2012	heart failure	Dr. Lewis
simvastatin	20mg	once daily with supper	mouth	5/12/2009	high cholesterol	Dr. Lewis

## Jerk Seasoning (Rub)

### Ingredients:

2 Tb Dried Minced Onion  
 1 Tb Sugar  
 2 1\2 tsp. Thyme  
 2 tsp Garlic Powder  
 1 1\2 tsp. Black Pepper  
 1 1\2 tsp. All Spice  
 1 tsp. Red Pepper Flakes  
 1 tsp. Cayenne Pepper  
 1\2 tsp. Dried Chives  
 1\4 tsp. Cinnamon  
 1\4 tsp. Nutmeg  
 1\4 tsp. Ground Cloves  
 1\8 tsp. Tumeric

### Directions:

Combine all ingredients in a small container.  
  
 May rub over chicken or pork chops to season.  
  
 Fire up the grill or smoker.  
 Cook until done!

### Health Information

Serving size: 1 tsp  
 Calories: 6  
 Total Fat: <1 g  
 Sat Fat 0 g  
 Sodium <1 mg  
 Cholesterol 0 mg  
 Carbs 2 g  
 Protein <1 g  
 Sugars <1 g  
 Fiber <1 g  
 Potassium 14 mg



Recipe from "Breaking the Salt Habit" by Erik Williams. Buy his book on our website [www.myhearthelp.com/store](http://www.myhearthelp.com/store).

**Quote of the Month:** "The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be" Ralph Waldo Emerson.

**Bible Verse of the Month:**

"He is not here, but is risen! Luke 24:6.

## Did you Know?

Did you know that a subcutaneous ICD (defibrillator under the skin) is available? First approved by the FDA in 2012, the device is now fully available in the marketplace. As you probably remember from before, a defibrillator is used to treat individuals with life threatening heart rhythms such as ventricular tachycardia or ventricular fibrillation. A defibrillator may also be implanted in individuals who are at risk of developing these abnormal heart rhythms such as individuals with a weak heart. If the abnormal rhythm occurs, the defibrillator shocks the heart back to normal rhythm. Traditionally, a defibrillator and its wires are placed thru a vein in the upper chest. The wires are threaded down into the heart and the generator or "box" sits in a pocket under the skin in the upper chest. Some individuals have chronic

recurrent infections of their devices requiring them to be removed. Other limitations are individuals that have veins that are closed off and unable to be opened. In these cases, the subcutaneous defibrillator may be helpful. It does not have any wires that go into the heart. The box sits just under the skin under the arm pit on the left side of the chest. The electrode is threaded under the skin toward the breastbone. Nothing goes into the heart itself. The limitations of the device is that it cannot pace the heart out of an abnormal heart rhythm like the traditional device. This type of pacing can sometimes prevent a shock. It is also not a pacemaker like a traditional defibrillator. So if an individual needs the device for a pacemaker as well, this would not be indicated. However, it is certainly nice to have another option. (1).



When the heart is weak, it goes thru a remodeling process. Unlike remodeling your house, heart remodeling is not a good thing. It makes the heart become even less efficient and not pump as well. These drugs help prevent this remodeling process, stabilize the heart, and prevent further deterioration. In some cases, these medications may even improve the heart's function. If that wasn't enough, they have been shown in multiple trials to decrease heart failure symptoms, decrease hospitalizations, and prolong life. There are several ace inhibitors available on the market, with the most common ones being lisinopril, enalapril, and ramipril. In some individuals, a cough develops with this medication and it may be substituted for a class of drug called an angiotensin receptor blocker. Some of the commonly used drugs in this class are valsartan, losartan, and candesartan. The beta blockers that have been approved to treat heart failure include coreg (carvedilol), metoprolol succinate (Toprol XL), and bisoprolol. So, while these drugs are used to treat high blood pressure, they can also be used to help make the heart stronger . If the heart does become stronger, these medications are still recommended. Withdrawal of them may cause a rapid deterioration in heart function. (2).

In summary, make sure you understand why you are taking what you are taking. Ask questions. Don't change or stop any medications without first checking with your healthcare provider or your cardiologist if it is a heart medication.

