



Our Recommendations

ACE Inhibitors are used by tens of millions of Americans to treat high blood pressure, heart failure, diabetes, and kidney disease. There are 10 medicines in this class of drugs, with generic versions available for all but three. The cost for ACE Inhibitors varies from about \$20 to more than \$100 a month. (See page 2.)

To help you and your doctor choose which ACE Inhibitor is best and most cost-effective for you, *Consumer Reports* has evaluated the drugs in this category based on their effectiveness, safety, and price. This two-page brief is a summary of a 20-page report you can access on the Internet at www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org. You can also learn about other drugs we've analyzed on this free Web site. Our independent evaluations are based on scientific reviews conducted by the Oregon Health and Science University-based Drug Effectiveness Review Project. Grants from the Engelberg Foundation and National Library of Medicine help fund *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs*.

DO YOU NEED AN ACE INHIBITOR?

ACE Inhibitors can lower blood pressure. But they should not be taken as “first-step” treatment by people with high blood pressure who do not have heart disease, diabetes, or kidney disease. Low-cost diuretics (often called water pills) are a better initial choice in that case. However, ACE Inhibitors are the first choice of many doctors for people who have high blood pressure and/or heart failure (when the heart muscle weakens). The ACE Inhibitors are also widely used to treat people after a heart attack (in the absence of heart failure) and people with diabetes with and without kidney disease. The table below gives you general guidance on blood pressure levels and treatment.

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For most people who need an ACE Inhibitor, four low-cost or moderately priced generics and one moderately priced brand-name drug are the best choices. They are proven, life-saving medicines with more than 20 years of widespread use and could save you \$1,200 or more a year if you are now taking one of the highest-priced ACE Inhibitors.

Your choice of an ACE Inhibitor should depend on your needs. Studies have shown that certain ACE Inhibitors are more effective and safer than others for certain conditions. Taking effectiveness, safety, dosing convenience, and cost into account, we have selected the following ACE Inhibitors as *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs*:

- For high blood pressure—benazepril, enalapril, and lisinopril
- For heart failure—captopril, enalapril
- After a heart attack—lisinopril
- For diabetics—ramipril (Altace)
- For people with kidney disease—benazepril, ramipril (Altace)

All but one of these medicines are low-cost or moderately priced generics. Ramipril (Altace) is a brand-name drug, but is moderately priced. All have been proven to be either just as effective as or superior to other ACE Inhibitors.

ACE Inhibitors are generally safe medicines, but they can cause some annoying side effects, including a persistent dry cough, fatigue, weakness, dizziness, and potassium imbalance. They can also cause a rare but life-threatening swelling of the windpipe. You can often minimize side effects by taking the lowest dose that is effective for you.

The information in this brief was last updated in April 2005.

Blood Pressure Levels and Treatment Guidance

Blood Pressure Classification	Systolic Measure (mm Hg)	Diastolic Measure (mm Hg)	General Treatment Guidance
Normal	Below 120	Below 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No treatment needed. • Healthy lifestyle encouraged to maintain normal blood pressure.
Prehypertensive	120-139	80-89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifestyle changes needed: weight loss, quitting smoking, low-salt and low-fat diet, moderate alcohol use, and increased exercise. • Drug treatment not indicated except if you have diabetes, kidney or heart disease.
Stage 1 High Blood Pressure	140-159	90-99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifestyle changes urged, same as above. • Drug treatment needed. Doctor may start with one medicine to see if it does the job.
Stage 2 High Blood Pressure	160 or above	100 or above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifestyle changes urged, same as above. • Drug treatment needed. Two or more medicines usually required to bring blood pressure down.

ACE Inhibitor Cost Comparison and Best Buy Indication—Examples¹

	Generic Name and Dose	Brand Name ²	Frequency of Use (per day)	Average Monthly Cost ³	Best Buy Indication
	Benazepril 10 mg	Lotensin	One	\$43	
CR BEST BUY	Benazepril 10 mg	Generic	One	\$22	High Blood Pressure, Kidney Disease
	Benazepril 20 mg	Lotensin	One	\$43	
CR BEST BUY	Benazepril 20 mg	Generic	One	\$22	High Blood Pressure, Kidney Disease
	Captopril 12.5 mg	Capoten	Three	\$133	
CR BEST BUY	Captopril 12.5 mg	Generic	Three	\$30	Heart Failure
	Captopril 25mg	Capoten	Three	\$131	
CR BEST BUY	Captopril 25mg	Generic	Three	\$31	Heart Failure
	Captopril 100mg	Capoten	Three	\$271	
CR BEST BUY	Captopril 100mg	Generic	Three	\$55	Heart Failure
	Enalapril 5mg	Vasotec	One	\$39	
CR BEST BUY	Enalapril 5mg	Generic	One	\$18	High Blood Pressure, Heart Failure
	Enalapril 10mg	Vasotec	One	\$40	
CR BEST BUY	Enalapril 10mg	Generic	One	\$19	High Blood Pressure, Heart Failure
	Fosinopril 10mg	Monopril	One	\$47	
	Fosinopril 10mg	Generic	One	\$35	
	Lisinopril 10mg	Zestril	One	\$40	
CR BEST BUY	Lisinopril 10mg	Generic	One	\$18	After a Heart Attack
	Lisinopril 20mg	Prinivil	One	\$41	
CR BEST BUY	Lisinopril 20mg	Generic	One	\$20	After a Heart Attack
	Moexipril 7.5mg	Univasc	One	\$46	
	Moexipril 7.5mg	Generic	One	\$30	
	Perindopril 4mg	Aceon	One	\$56	
	Perindopril 8mg	Aceon	One	\$68	
	Quinapril 20mg	Accupril	One	\$46	
	Quinapril 20mg	Generic	One	\$38	
CR BEST BUY	Ramipril 1.25mg	Altace	One	\$44	Diabetes, Kidney Disease
CR BEST BUY	Ramipril 2.5mg	Altace	One	\$50	Diabetes, Kidney Disease
	Trandolapril 2mg	Mavik	One	\$42	
	Trandolapril 4mg	Mavik	One	\$41	

UNDERSTANDING GENERICS: A generic drug is one that is sold under its generic name. For example, in this table, the first drug listed is available as both generic benazepril and as brand-name Lotensin. Both have the same active ingredient. When column two says “generic,” the price listed is for the generic version at the specified dose.

(1) For a complete list of ACE Inhibitors at various doses and their prices, go to www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org to download the full 20-page report.

(2) “Generic” indicates that this drug is sold under its generic name.

(3) Prices reflect nationwide retail average for January 2005, rounded to the nearest dollar; data provided by NDCHealth, a health-care information company.