



Our Recommendations

ACE Inhibitors are used by tens of millions of Americans to treat high blood pressure, heart failure, to prevent repeat heart attacks, and to prevent the decline of kidney function in people with high blood pressure and/or diabetes. The monthly cost for ACEIs varies from less than \$10 to more than \$300. This report gives you information that could save you hundreds of dollars a year if you are currently taking a brand-name ACEI, and up to \$3,000 or more a year if you are taking the highest-priced ACEIs.

To help you and your doctor choose the right ACE inhibitor if you need one, *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs* has evaluated the drugs in this category based on their effectiveness, safety, and cost. This 2-page brief is a summary of a 19-page report you can access for *free* on the Internet at ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs. This Web site also has other free reports about other drugs we've analyzed.

DO YOU NEED AN ACE INHIBITOR?

The ACEIs can lower blood pressure. But they should not be used as the initial "first-step" treatment for most people with high blood pressure who do not have heart disease, diabetes, or kidney disease. In those cases, inexpensive generic diuretics (often called "water pills") are a better first choice. But if you're already taking a diuretic and your blood pressure is still not low enough, adding another drug, including an ACE inhibitor, to your regimen can help.

ACE inhibitors are a first option if you have heart failure with or without high blood pressure. They are also a first option to treat people after a heart attack, as well as people with diabetes (with and without kidney disease). The table below gives you general guidance on blood pressure levels and treatment.

ACEIs are effective, life-saving medicines that are generally considered safe. They help lower the risk of both fatal and nonfatal heart attacks and strokes, and kidney failure. And they improve quality of life.

We have selected the following five ACEIs as *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs* based primarily on the evidence for their effectiveness, but also on dosing convenience and cost in treating the following conditions:

- For high blood pressure: *benazepril, enalapril, and lisinopril*
- For heart failure: *captopril, and enalapril*
- After a heart attack: *lisinopril*
- For diabetics: *ramipril*
- For people with kidney disease: *benazepril, and ramipril*

All of these medicines are low-cost or moderately-priced generics. All have been proven to be just as effective or superior to other ACEIs in treating the general population.

ACE inhibitors are generally safe medicines, but they can cause 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 wind-pipe. You can often minimize side effects by taking the lowest dose that is effective for you.

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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	- No treatment needed - Healthy lifestyle encouraged to maintain normal blood pressure
Prehypertensive	120-139	80-89	- Lifestyle changes needed: weight loss, quitting smoking, low-salt and low-fat diet, curb excessive 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	- Lifestyle changes urged, same as above - Drug treatment needed. Doctor may start with one medicine (usually a diuretic) to see if it does the job
Stage 2 High Blood Pressure	160 or above	100 or above	- Contact your doctor immediately - Drug treatment needed. Two or more medicines usually required to bring blood pressure down - Lifestyle changes, as described above, are a critical component of your treatment

Source: Chobanian AV, Bakris GL, Black HR, et al., "The seventh report of the Joint National Committee on prevention, detection, evaluation and treatment of high blood pressure," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2003; 289(19):2560-2572

ACE Inhibitor Comparison and Best Buy Indication—Examples¹

	Generic name, dosage strength, and form	Brand Name ¹	Frequency of Use (per day)	Total Daily Dose	Average Monthly Cost ²	Best Buy Indication
	Benazepril 10 mg tablet	Lotensin	One	10 mg	\$61	
CR BEST BUY	Benazepril 10 mg tablet	Generic	One	10 mg	\$8	High blood pressure, for people with kidney disease
	Benazepril 20 mg tablet	Lotensin	One	20 mg	\$61	
CR BEST BUY	Benazepril 20 mg tablet	Generic	One	20 mg	\$7	High blood pressure, for people with kidney disease
	Benazepril 40 mg tablet	Lotensin	One	40 mg	\$60	
CR BEST BUY	Benazepril 40 mg tablet	Generic	One	40 mg	\$7	High blood pressure, for people with kidney disease
	Captopril 12.5 mg tablet	Capoten	Three	37.5 mg	\$189	
CR BEST BUY	Captopril 12.5 mg tablet	Generic	Three	37.5 mg	\$24	Heart failure
	Captopril 25 mg tablet	Capoten	Three	75 mg	\$204	
CR BEST BUY	Captopril 25 mg tablet	Generic	Three	75 mg	\$24	Heart failure
	Captopril 50 mg tablet	Capoten	Three	150 mg	\$384	
CR BEST BUY	Captopril 50 mg tablet	Generic	Three	150 mg	\$57	Heart failure
	Captopril 100 mg tablet	Capoten	Three	300 mg	\$426	
CR BEST BUY	Captopril 100 mg tablet	Generic	Three	300 mg	\$75	Heart failure
	Enalapril 5 mg tablet	Vasotec	One	5 mg	\$80	
CR BEST BUY	Enalapril 5 mg tablet	Generic	One	5 mg	\$8	High blood pressure, heart failure
	Enalapril 10 mg tablet	Vasotec	One	10 mg	\$87	
CR BEST BUY	Enalapril 10 mg tablet	Generic	One	10 mg	\$8	High blood pressure, heart failure
	Enalapril 20 mg tablet	Vasotec	One to Two	20 to 40 mg	\$117-\$234	
CR BEST BUY	Enalapril 20 mg tablet	Generic	One to Two	20 to 40 mg	\$14-\$28	High blood pressure, heart failure
	Lisinopril 5 mg tablet	Prinivil	One	5 mg	\$42	
CR BEST BUY	Lisinopril 5 mg tablet	Generic	One	5 mg	\$7	Heart attack, high blood pressure
	Lisinopril 10 mg tablet	Prinivil	One	10 mg	\$46	
CR BEST BUY	Lisinopril 10 mg tablet	Generic	One	10 mg	\$6	Heart attack, high blood pressure
	Lisinopril 20 mg tablet	Prinivil	One	20 mg	\$44	
CR BEST BUY	Lisinopril 20 mg tablet	Generic	One	20 mg	\$6	Heart attack, high blood pressure
	Lisinopril 30 mg tablet	Zestril	One	30 mg	\$83	
CR BEST BUY	Lisinopril 30 mg tablet	Generic	One	30 mg	\$19	Heart attack, high blood pressure
	Lisinopril 40 mg tablet	Prinivil	One	40 mg	\$89	
CR BEST BUY	Lisinopril 40 mg tablet	Generic	One	40 mg	\$18	Heart attack, high blood pressure
	Ramipril 1.25 mg capsule	Altace	One	1.25 mg	\$66	
CR BEST BUY	Ramipril 1.25 mg capsule	Generic	One	1.25 mg	\$38	For people with diabetes or kidney disease
	Ramipril 1.25 mg tablet ³	Altace	One	1.25 mg	\$56	
	Ramipril 2.5 mg capsule	Altace	One	2.5 mg	\$79	
CR BEST BUY	Ramipril 2.5 mg capsule	Generic	One	2.5 mg	\$44	For people with diabetes or kidney disease
	Ramipril 2.5 mg tablet	Altace	One	2.5 mg	\$88	
	Ramipril 5 mg capsule	Altace	One	5 mg	\$81	
CR BEST BUY	Ramipril 5 mg capsule	Generic	One	5 mg	\$46	For people with diabetes or kidney disease
	Ramipril 5 mg tablet	Altace	One	5 mg	\$78	
	Ramipril 10 mg capsule	Altace	One	10 mg	\$92	
CR BEST BUY	Ramipril 10 mg capsule	Generic	One	10 mg	\$51	For people with diabetes or kidney disease
	Ramipril 10 mg tablet	Altace	One	10 mg	\$79	

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- * Selected drugs and dosages only. For a complete price list of ACE inhibitors, go to ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs to download the free, full 20-page report.
1. "Generic" indicates that this drug 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 2 says "generic," the price listed is for the generic version at the specified dose.
 2. Prices reflect nationwide retail average for February 2009, rounded to the nearest dollar. Information derived by *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs* from data provided by Wolters Kluwer Health, Pharmaceutical Audit Suite[®]. Wolters Kluwer Health is not involved in our analysis or recommendations.
 3. Ramipril tablets are only available as a brand-name product, so prices for generic tablets are not provided.