

# Treating High Blood Pressure: Is an ACE Inhibitor Drug Right for You?

## What are ACE inhibitors?

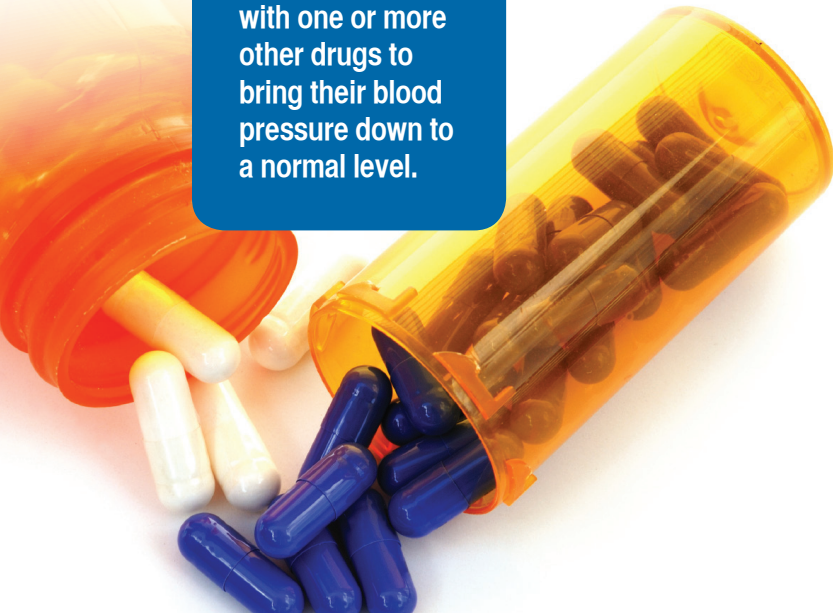
ACE inhibitors, or ACEIs, are a group of drugs used to treat high blood pressure and its effects on the heart. They are also used to treat heart failure, and to prevent repeat heart attacks. ACEIs can also be used to slow down kidney failure in people who have high blood pressure or diabetes, or both.

## Why is it important to control high blood pressure?

High blood pressure is a leading cause of death. Millions of Americans do not know they have it. It can be hard to keep under control, and it causes more heart attacks and strokes than any other condition. It also raises your risk of heart failure, dementia, and kidney failure.

## How do ACE inhibitors help?

ACE inhibitors help the arteries to relax. This lowers blood pressure and reduces the amount of work the heart has to do. They can be used alone, but often they are used along with other drugs, such as diuretics, beta-blockers, calcium channel blockers, and ARBs.



Many people need to take an ACE inhibitor along with one or more other drugs to bring their blood pressure down to a normal level.

## What are the side effects of ACE inhibitors?

The side effects of ACE inhibitors can include dizziness, tiredness, weakness, and a dry cough. ACEIs can also make the amount of potassium in your body get too high. And in rare cases, they can cause swelling in the face, lips, or throat, which can make it hard to breathe. To reduce side effects, try to start with as low a dose as possible. You may have to try more than one ACE inhibitor to find the one that works best for you.


## Our advice:


If you are diagnosed with high blood pressure or another heart problem, talk with your doctor about which drugs are right for you.

If your blood pressure is slightly above normal, making lifestyle changes may be enough. These include eating healthier foods, exercising, controlling your weight, limiting alcohol, and stopping smoking. You may also need to take a diuretic (such as generic hydrochlorothiazide or chlorthalidone).

If you cannot lower your blood pressure enough with those changes, then you may benefit from adding an ACE inhibitor. Ask your doctor.


We compared the cost and safety of ACE inhibitors. We also compared how well they work to lower blood pressure, help heart failure and kidney failure, and prevent another heart attack. We chose these as **Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs**. All are available as generics.

 For high blood pressure—**benazepril**, **enalapril** or **lisinopril**

 For heart failure—**captopril** or **enalapril**

 After a heart attack—**lisinopril**

 For people with diabetes—**ramipril**












 For people with kidney disease—**benazepril** or **ramipril**

The chart on the next page can help you compare costs.

# ACE Inhibitors: Drug Comparison Chart\*

**Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs are in blue.** We recommend these drugs because they work as well and are as safe as the other drugs, and they cost less. The dollar symbol **\$** means the dose of that drug may be available for a low monthly cost through programs offered by large chain stores, like Costco, CVS, Kmart, Kroger, Sam's Club, Target, Walmart, and Walgreens. Some of these stores have restrictions or charge a membership fee, however.

Our analysis is based on a scientific review by the Oregon Health and Science University-based Drug Effectiveness Review Project. This is a summary of a longer, more detailed report you can find at [www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org](http://www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org).

| Best Buy  | Generic Name & Strength        | Brand Name <sup>A</sup> | Pills per Day <sup>B</sup> | Average Cost per Month <sup>C</sup>  | Recommended Use   |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--|---|
|   | Benazepril 20 mg tablet        | Lotensin                | One                        | \$69   |   |
|    | <b>Benazepril 20 mg tablet</b> | <b>Generic</b>          | <b>One</b>                 | <b>\$8</b>    | High blood pressure, and for people with kidney disease |
|    | <b>Captopril 50 mg tablet</b>  | <b>Generic</b>          | <b>Three</b>               | <b>\$57</b>   | Heart failure   |
|   | Enalapril 10 mg tablet         | Vasotec                 | One                        | \$96   |   |
|  | <b>Enalapril 10 mg tablet</b>  | <b>Generic</b>          | <b>One</b>                 | <b>\$8</b>  | High blood pressure, heart failure                      |
|   | Fosinopril 20 mg tablet        | Generic                 | One                        | \$26        |   |
|   | Lisinopril 10 mg tablet        | Prinivil                | One                        | \$46   |   |
|   | Lisinopril 10 mg tablet        | Zestril                 | One                        | \$57   |   |
|  | <b>Lisinopril 10 mg tablet</b> | <b>Generic</b>          | <b>One</b>                 | <b>\$6</b>  | Heart attack, high blood pressure                       |
|   | Perindopril 4 mg tablet        | Aceon                   | One                        | \$99   |   |
|   | Perindopril 4 mg tablet        | Generic                 | One                        | \$54   |   |
|   | Ramipril 2.5 mg capsule        | Altace                  | One                        | \$87   |   |
|  | <b>Ramipril 2.5 mg capsule</b> | <b>Generic</b>          | <b>One</b>                 | <b>\$36</b>  | Diabetes or kidney disease                              |
|   | Trandolapril 2 mg tablet       | Mavik                   | One                        | \$52   |   |
|   | Trandolapril 2 mg tablet       | Generic                 | One                        | \$35        |   |

\* Due to space limitations, this chart does not list all ACEIs. For a more complete list, see the full report at [www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org](http://www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org).

<sup>A</sup> "Generic" indicates that this drug is sold under its generic name.

<sup>B</sup> Depending on your health conditions, symptoms, and response to the medicine, your doctor may adjust your dose to be either higher or lower than what is stated in this price chart.

<sup>C</sup> Prices are based on nationwide average retail prices for January 2011. *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs* obtained prices from data provided by Wolters Kluwer Pharma Solutions, which is not involved in our analysis or recommendations.

This series is produced by Consumer Reports and *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs*, a public information project supported by grants from the state Attorney General Consumer and Prescriber Education Grant Program which is funded by the multi-state settlement of consumer fraud claims regarding the marketing of the prescription drug Neurontin. This brief should not be viewed as a substitute for a consultation with a medical or health professional. It is provided to enhance communication with your doctor, not replace it.