



Atenolol

(a ten' oh lole)

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URL of this page: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/druginfo/meds/a684031.html>

IMPORTANT WARNING:

Do not stop taking atenolol without talking to your doctor. Suddenly stopping atenolol may cause chest pain, heart attack, or irregular heartbeat. Your doctor will probably decrease your dose gradually.

Why is this medication prescribed?

Atenolol is used alone or in combination with other medications to treat high blood pressure. It also is used to prevent angina (chest pain) and improve survival after a heart attack. Atenolol is in a class of medications called beta blockers. It works by relaxing blood vessels and slowing heart rate to improve blood flow and decrease blood pressure.

How should this medicine be used?

Atenolol comes as a tablet to take by mouth. It is usually taken once or twice a day. To help you remember to take atenolol, take it around the same time every day. Follow the directions on your prescription label carefully, and ask your doctor or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand. Take atenolol exactly as directed. Do not take more or less of it or take it more often than prescribed by your doctor.

Atenolol controls high blood pressure and angina but does not cure them. It may take 1-2 weeks before you feel the full benefit of atenolol. Continue to take atenolol even if you feel well. Do not stop taking atenolol without talking to your doctor.

Other uses for this medicine

Atenolol is also used sometimes to prevent migraine headaches and to treat alcohol withdrawal, heart failure, and irregular heartbeat. Talk to your doctor about the possible risks of using this medication for your condition.

This medication may be prescribed for other uses; ask your doctor or pharmacist for more information.

What special precautions should I follow?

Before taking atenolol,

- tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to atenolol or any other medications.
- tell your doctor and pharmacist what prescription and nonprescription medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements, and herbal products you are taking. Be sure to mention any of the following: calcium channel blockers such as diltiazem (Cardizem, Dilacor, Tiazac, others) and verapamil (Calan, Isoptin, Verelan); clonidine (Catapres); nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as indomethacin (Indocin); and reserpine (Serpalan, Serpasil, Serpatabs). Your doctor may need to change the doses of your medications or monitor you carefully for side effects.
- tell your doctor if you have or have ever had asthma or other lung disease; diabetes; severe allergies; an

overactive thyroid gland (hyperthyroidism); pheochromocytoma; heart failure; a slow heart rate; circulation problems; or heart or kidney disease.

- tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding. If you become pregnant while taking atenolol, call your doctor immediately.
- if you are having surgery, including dental surgery, tell the doctor or dentist that you are taking atenolol.
- you should know that if you have allergic reactions to different substances, your reactions may be worse while you are using atenolol, and your allergic reactions may not respond to the usual doses of injectable epinephrine.

What special dietary instructions should I follow?

If your doctor prescribes a low-salt or low-sodium diet, follow these directions carefully.

What should I do if I forget a dose?

Take the missed dose as soon as you remember it. However, if it is almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose and continue your regular dosing schedule. Do not take a double dose to make up for a missed one.

What side effects can this medication cause?

Atenolol may cause side effects. Tell your doctor if any of these symptoms are severe or do not go away:

- dizziness
- lightheadedness
- tiredness
- drowsiness
- depression
- nausea
- diarrhea

Some side effects can be serious. The following symptoms are uncommon, but if you experience any of them, call your doctor immediately:

- shortness of breath
- swelling of the hands, feet, ankles, or lower legs
- unusual weight gain
- fainting

Atenolol may cause other side effects. Call your doctor if you have any unusual problems while taking this medication.

If you experience a serious side effect, you or your doctor may send a report to the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) MedWatch Adverse Event Reporting program online [at <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch>] or by phone [1-800-332-1088].

What should I know about storage and disposal of this medication?

Keep this medication in the container it came in, tightly closed, and out of reach of children. Store it at room temperature and away from excess heat and moisture (not in the bathroom). Throw away any medication that is outdated or no longer needed. Talk to your pharmacist about the proper disposal of your medication.

In case of emergency/overdose

In case of overdose, call your local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222. If the victim has collapsed or is not breathing, call local emergency services at 911.

Symptoms of overdose may include:

- lack of energy
- difficulty breathing
- wheezing
- slow heartbeat
- fainting
- swelling of the hands, feet, ankles, or lower legs
- unusual weight gain
- shakiness
- dizziness
- rapid heartbeat
- sweating or confusion
- blurred vision
- headache
- numbness or tingling of the mouth
- weakness
- excessive tiredness
- pale color
- sudden hunger

What other information should I know?

Keep all appointments with your doctor. Your blood pressure should be checked regularly to determine your response to atenolol. Your doctor may ask you to check your pulse (heart rate). Ask your pharmacist or doctor to teach you how to take your pulse. If your pulse is faster or slower than it should be, call your doctor.

Do not let anyone else take your medication. Ask your pharmacist any questions you have about refilling your prescription.

It is important for you to keep a written list of all of the prescription and nonprescription (over-the-counter) medicines you are taking, as well as any products such as vitamins, minerals, or other dietary supplements. You should bring this list with you each time you visit a doctor or if you are admitted to a hospital. It is also important information to carry with you in case of emergencies.

Brand names

- Tenormin[®]

Brand names of combination products

- Tenoretic[®] (containing Atenolol and Chlorthalidone)

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