

Enalapril

Why is this medication prescribed?

This drug belongs to a group of medications called ACE inhibitors. It is used to treat high blood pressure (hypertension) in adults and children. It works by relaxing blood vessels, causing them to widen. Lowering high blood pressure helps prevent strokes, heart attacks, and kidney problems.

How should this medicine be used?

Take this medication by mouth, usually once or twice a day; or as directed by your doctor. Remember to use it at the same time(s) each day. This medicine can raise your potassium levels, which rarely can cause serious side effects such as muscle weakness or a very slow heartbeat. The usual maximum dose for adults is 40 milligrams per day. It is important to continue taking this medication even if you feel well. Most people with high blood pressure do not feel sick. For the treatment of high blood pressure, it may take several weeks before the full benefit of this drug occurs or several weeks to months when used for congestive heart failure.

Other uses for this medicine

This medication is also used with other drugs (e.g., "water pills"/diuretics, digoxin) to treat congestive heart failure. This medication may also be used to help protect the kidneys from damage due to diabetes.

What special precautions should I follow?

Before taking enalapril, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to it; or to other ACE inhibitors (e.g., benazepril, captopril); or if you have any other allergies (including an allergic reaction after exposure to certain membranes used for blood filtering).

Before using this medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist your medical history, especially of: kidney disease, liver disease, high blood levels of potassium, heart problems, severe dehydration (and loss of electrolytes such as sodium), low blood flow to the brain (cerebrovascular insufficiency), blood vessel disease (e.g., collagen vascular diseases such as lupus, scleroderma).

If you have diabetes, enalapril may rarely cause low blood sugar levels (hypoglycemia) when you first start treatment with this medication.

This drug may make you dizzy; use caution engaging in activities requiring alertness such as driving or using machinery.

To minimize dizziness and light-headedness due to lowering of your blood pressure, get up slowly when rising from a seated or lying position. Serious loss of body fluids can also lower your blood pressure and worsen dizziness. Drink adequate fluids to prevent from becoming dehydrated.

Before having surgery, tell your doctor or dentist that you are taking this medication.

Caution is advised when using this drug in the elderly.

This medication is not recommended for use during pregnancy due to the risk for harm to an unborn baby. This drug passes into breast milk

What special dietary instructions should I follow?

Limit alcoholic beverages.

What should I do if I forget a dose?

If you miss a dose, use it as soon as you remember. If it is near the time of the next dose, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not double the dose to catch up.

What side effects can this medication cause?

Get emergency medical help if you have any of these signs of an allergic reaction: hives; severe stomach pain; difficulty breathing; swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat.

Call your doctor at once if you have any of these serious side effects:

- feeling light-headed, fainting;
- urinating more or less than usual, or not at all;
- fever, chills, body aches, flu symptoms;
- pale skin, easy bruising or bleeding;
- fast, pounding, or uneven heartbeats;
- chest pain; or
- swelling, rapid weight gain.

Less serious side effects may be more likely to occur, such as:

- cough;
- loss of taste sensation, loss of appetite;
- dizziness, drowsiness, headache;
- sleep problems (insomnia);
- dry mouth;
- nausea, vomiting, diarrhea; or
- mild skin itching or rash.

What storage conditions are needed for this medicine?

Store tablets at room temperature below 30 degrees C away from light and moisture.

In case of emergency/overdose

If overdose is suspected, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

What other information should I know?

This drug can cause serious (possibly fatal) harm to an unborn baby if used during pregnancy.

Vomiting, diarrhea, or heavy sweating can cause you to become dehydrated. This can lead to very low blood pressure, electrolyte disorders, or kidney failure while you are taking enalapril.

Drink plenty of water each day while you are taking this medication