

Health Update

Getting High Blood Pressure Under Control

(NAPSA)—Doctors have a new weapon in the war on hypertension, or high blood pressure.

The Problem

One of the most common conditions in the United States, high blood pressure affects nearly 72 million Americans. Fortunately, it's easily detected; unfortunately, it's often difficult to control. Of those diagnosed with high blood pressure, nearly two-thirds do not have it under control.

Uncontrolled hypertension can cause permanent changes to blood vessels and the heart that may create serious problems elsewhere in the body. According to the National Institutes of Health, a blood pressure of lower than 140/90 mm Hg, or lower than 130/80 mm Hg for certain high-risk groups, is considered to be under control.


Steps Toward A Solution

If you are currently being treated for high blood pressure, the most important thing is for you and your doctor to set an achievable goal to avoid complications. The American Heart Association suggests people take certain steps that may help get to their blood pressure goal.

These include:

- losing weight
- a healthy diet low in saturated fat, cholesterol and salt
- increasing physical activity, and

Quick Tips for Getting High Blood Pressure Under Control

- Lose weight.
- Eat a healthy diet low in saturated fat, cholesterol and salt.
- Exercise and be physically active.
- Limit alcohol to no more than one drink per day for women, two drinks a day for men.
- Discuss with your doctor the best medicine for you and take that medication as directed.
- Know what your blood pressure should be and work to keep it at that level. 

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A New Medication Provides A Treatment Option

Diet and exercise are often not enough for everyone to control his or her high blood pressure.

The American Heart Association recommends that you talk to a doctor about medication options. A powerful new treatment option for patients with high blood pressure who are uncontrolled on other medications was approved last year by the FDA. AZOR™ combines two

medications with two complementary mechanisms of action: the powerful calcium channel blocker amlodipine, which reduces the entrance of calcium into the blood vessels walls, with olmesartan medoxomil, which blocks angiotensin II receptors, the hormone that causes blood vessels to tighten and narrow. Together, the two medicines relax the blood vessels so blood can flow more easily.

In a clinical trial, AZOR 10/40 reduced systolic (top number) blood pressure up to an average of 30 points and the diastolic (bottom number) reading up to an average of 19 points, compared to a placebo reduction of 5 points for systolic blood pressure and 3 points for diastolic blood pressure.

Taking AZOR during pregnancy can cause injury to an unborn baby. If you get pregnant, talk to your doctor immediately.

Addressing A Silent Killer

High blood pressure is called the “silent killer” because it has no specific symptoms and increases the risk of serious complications.

To help avoid the damaging effects of high blood pressure, you and your doctor should discuss a treatment regimen that includes diet, exercise and, if necessary, the proper medication.



IMPORTANT PATIENT SAFETY INFORMATION

USE IN PREGNANCY

When used in pregnancy during the second and third trimesters, drugs that act directly on the renin-angiotensin system can cause injury and even death to the developing fetus. When pregnancy is detected, AZOR should be discontinued as soon as possible. See **WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS, Fetal/Neonatal Morbidity and Mortality** in the product information.

What is AZOR?

AZOR is a prescription drug used for the treatment of hypertension, or high blood pressure. AZOR contains two different active ingredients in one tablet, namely amlodipine and olmesartan medoxomil.

AZOR may be used either alone or in combination with other drugs to treat high blood pressure.

AZOR is not indicated for initial blood pressure therapy.

AZOR should not be used during pregnancy.

What should I tell my health care provider?

Be sure to tell your health care provider if you are trying to become pregnant, are already pregnant or are breast-feeding.

It is particularly important to tell your health care provider if you are currently taking diuretics (water pills) because starting AZOR therapy in some patients taking diuretics or who may have low salt or fluid levels may increase the possibility of hypotension (low blood pressure) that may require treatment.

Tell your health care provider if you have any heart problems, such as severe aortic stenosis (narrowing of the aortic valve), coronary artery disease or congestive heart failure.

Tell your health care provider if you have kidney or liver problems. While no initial dosage adjustments for AZOR are usually necessary for patients with kidney or liver problems, nor in those who are elderly, your health care provider may want to monitor you more closely.

If you are taking any other prescription or nonprescription medicines, including vitamins and herbal supplements, tell your health care provider. This information can help your health care provider avoid possible interactions with AZOR. If you decide to stop taking AZOR for any reason, you should notify your health care provider as soon as possible.

What are some possible side effects of AZOR?

The most common side effect with AZOR was edema. In the clinical study, only edema occurred in greater than or equal to 3% of patients treated with AZOR and more frequently than placebo. The placebo-subtracted incidence was 5.7% with AZOR 5/20 mg, 6.2% with AZOR 5/40 mg, 13.3% with AZOR 10/20 mg and 11.2% with AZOR 10/40 mg. The edema incidence for placebo was 12.3%. A placebo is an inactive, nondrug substance, such as a sugar pill, that is given in a drug study to compare the effect of a treatment, including the drug being studied, with the effect of the same treatment without the drug. Placebo-subtracted incidence means subtracting the percent of patients who took placebo and had edema from the total percent of patients who had edema for each other dose.

Other side effects occurred less often than edema but at about the same or greater frequency as in patients receiving placebo. These side effects included low blood pressure, low blood pressure after standing up too quickly, rash, itching, heart palpitation, urinating more often, and excessive urination throughout the night.

In separate clinical studies of the individual components of AZOR, other common side effects included headache, dizziness and flushing. Call your health care provider if you experience any unpleasant effects while taking AZOR.

Please see full product information at www.AZOR.com.