If you have high blood pressure (also called hypertension), you may need to take medications prescribed by your doctor to help lower your blood pressure. Most people with high blood pressure need to take 2 or more medications to control their blood pressure. This handout is about a high blood pressure pill that contains 2 different medications, hydrochlorothiazide (HCTZ) and lisinopril. The combination pill is called lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide.

**What is hypertension?**
Hypertension means having higher than normal blood pressure. Blood pressure is the force of your blood on the walls of your blood vessels. This force, or pressure, enables blood to pump throughout your body. Everyone needs a certain amount of pressure to make this process possible. When the force of blood against your artery walls is too strong, you have high blood pressure or hypertension.

When you have high blood pressure, your heart has to work too hard to send blood throughout your body. By lowering your blood pressure, you can help take this extra demand off your heart and blood vessels.

The top number (119/79) of your blood pressure measurement is called the systolic blood pressure. This is the force of blood against your arteries when your heart is sending blood to your body. The lower number (119/79) is called the diastolic blood pressure. This is the force of blood against your arteries while your heart relaxes between beats. Both numbers are important.

**Here are the ranges for different levels of blood pressure.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you are:</th>
<th>Your blood pressure target is:</th>
<th>What you can do:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An adult 18–59 years old</td>
<td>139/89 or below</td>
<td>• Take medications as directed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person with diabetes</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Eat less sodium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person with certain types of kidney problems</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Exercise regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An adult 60 years of age or older without diabetes and without certain types of kidney problems</td>
<td>149/89 or below</td>
<td>• Avoid drinking alcohol in excess</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What is lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide?**
Lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide is a combination pill. It is a convenient and economical way to get 2 good blood pressure medications in one pill. Small doses of two medications may work better and have fewer side effects compared to a higher dose of one medication. Talk to your doctor to decide what is best.

**How does taking lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide lower my blood pressure?**
Lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide contains a diuretic called hydrochlorothiazide that works in the kidneys. It helps your body get rid of excess water and sodium when you urinate. This is important because having extra fluid in your body can contribute to high blood pressure. Diuretics also relax and widen the walls of the arteries.

Lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide also contains the ACE inhibitor lisinopril, which lowers blood pressure by causing the blood vessels to relax and widen. This increases the supply of blood and oxygen to the organs (heart, kidneys, and brain) and helps the heart beat more easily.

You may need other medications in addition to lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide to help control your blood pressure. Ask your doctor or other health care professional for more information.

**What problems could I have taking lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide?**
Most people who take this medication do not have any side effects or problems. Some people get a mild cough or tickle in the back of the throat. If the cough is not bothersome, you may continue taking lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide. Very rarely, lisinopril may cause allergic reactions, such as swelling of the face,
eyes, lips, tongue, or throat. If you experience an allergic reaction, stop the medication and contact your doctor or other health care professional. If you have difficulty breathing or have an emergency medical condition, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital.

Because lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide combines hydrochlorothiazide (which may lower potassium levels in the blood) with lisinopril (which may increase potassium levels in the blood), potassium levels are unlikely to go up or down by much. Your doctor may request a potassium level blood test to check.

Occasionally, you may have some dizziness during the first 2 weeks taking lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide. If so, you may want to get up slowly or sit down if you feel dizzy. If it does not go away, please talk to your doctor.

How can I remember to take lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide?

• Do not take lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide if you are pregnant or may become pregnant in the near future, or if you are breastfeeding.
• If you think you may need to take Plan B emergency contraception, stop taking this medication immediately.
• Tell your doctor or other health care professional if you have kidney problems or gout.

When you take any medication, consider the benefits compared with the small chance of experiencing a side effect. Lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide controls blood pressure and lowers your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Talking with your doctor about any side effects can help you and your doctor choose the medicine and dose that’s best for you.

How does lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide fit into my hypertension treatment?

Lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide is an important part of your treatment. It does not take the place of healthy eating, regular physical activity, and stress management. If you are prescribed lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide, it’s important to take it as directed. Don’t stop taking it without consulting with your doctor or other health care professional first. If you have side effects, your doctor may be able to change the medication or the dosage to prevent them. Blood pressure medicines are taken long term, so work with your doctor to ensure you are taking the right medicine and dose for you.

What do I need to know about lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide?

Take the time to ask your doctor or other health care professional these questions about lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide:
• Why am I taking it?
• How often and for how long should I take it?
• Are there any special instructions for taking it?
• Are there activities that I should avoid while taking it?
• What kind of side effects could I have and what symptoms should I look for?
• Is there a way to avoid any side effects?

How can I reduce the risk of having problems taking lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide?

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• If you think you may need to take Plan B emergency contraception, stop taking this medication immediately.
• Tell your doctor or other health care professional if you have kidney problems or gout.

When you take any medication, consider the benefits compared with the small chance of experiencing a side effect. Lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide controls blood pressure and lowers your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Talking with your doctor about any side effects can help you and your doctor choose the medicine and dose that’s best for you.

How can I remember to take lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide?

Everyone has struggled with remembering to do things that they don’t regularly do. There are a number of things that can help you remember, such as:
• Make a simple chart and post it where you will see it every day, like on the mirror in the bathroom.
• Set an alarm clock or watch as a reminder.
• Establish a daily routine for taking your medications, such as at bedtime, mealtime, or before the evening news on TV.
• Use a pillbox that has 7 sections for the days of the week.
• Record taking your medications on a wallet card or calendar.
• Can you think of others?

Other resources

• To find more information about lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide or any other medications, go to kp.org and search our drug encyclopedia.
• Contact your facility’s Health Education Center or Department for books, videos, classes, and other resources.
• If you feel you cannot afford your medication, financial assistance may be available. To learn more, talk to your Kaiser Permanente pharmacist or call the Kaiser Permanente Medical Financial Assistance Program (MFAP) at 1-866-399-7696.