

Newsletter article

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Angiotensin II is an enzyme in the body which helps to raise blood pressure by narrowing the blood vessels. It also affects the blood pressure by stimulating the release of a hormone called aldosterone, which increases the body's retention of sodium and water.

ACE (angiotensin converting enzyme) inhibitors are medications often prescribed for blood pressure control. These medications block the formation of Angiotensin II, so that blood vessels relax, and the retention of sodium and water is decreased. Both of these actions lower blood pressure. Captopril (Capoten), Enalapril, Lisinopril (Zestril), and Rampipril (Altace) are all ACE inhibitors. ACE inhibitors are generally well tolerated, but there are possible side effects, such as a dry cough, an increase in potassium level in the blood, rash, dizziness, and a change in taste. Rarely, Ace inhibitors may cause body tissue swelling, which if occurring in the throat, can be life threatening.

Ace inhibitors have been found to be helpful, and therefore, prescribed, for other illnesses, such as heart attack treatment and prevention, diabetes, chronic kidney failure and atherosclerotic heart disease.

As with taking any medication, follow your doctor's orders.