

HSE COVID-19: Interim Clinical Guidance – Antihypertensive (High Blood Pressure) Medicines 18th March 2020 v1

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Purpose: This guidance is to clarify current evidence for the continuing use of anti-hypertensive medicines including ACE inhibitors and ARBs during Covid-19 pandemic.

Target Audience: All healthcare professionals, patients and the public.

Antihypertensive (High Blood Pressure) Medicines and COVID-19

The HSE is today, (Wednesday 18th March 2020), advising anyone taking antihypertensive (high blood pressure) medicines to continue to take them as normal, unless you are told not to by a healthcare professional. This includes ACE inhibitors and Angiotensin II Receptor Antagonists (ARBs).

Dr Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer in the HSE advises, “There is no evidence to stop any medicines for high blood pressure. Stopping these medicines may cause your blood pressure to rise. This may increase your risk of heart attack and stroke.”

The HSE advises:

The HSE supports the European Society of Cardiology advice which highlights there is a lack of evidence supporting a harmful effect of ACE inhibitors and Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARBs) in the context of the pandemic COVID-19 outbreak.

The HSE is constantly evaluating emerging evidence about the most appropriate treatment of COVID-19.

ACE inhibitors and Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers (ARBs) are a group of medicines widely used to treat high blood pressure and heart failure. They may also be prescribed after a heart attack. They help prevent future strokes and heart attacks.

Background:

Information which suggests a theoretical link between ACE inhibitors and ARBs and more severe Covid-19 infection has been circulating on print and social media.

In recent days, in addition to the European Society of Cardiology, groups such as the International Society of Hypertension have made similar recommendations to continue to take these medicines.

Information on the virus and the disease that causes COVID-19 is rapidly evolving and the above information is accurate as of today's date. The situation regarding COVID-19 and its

prevention and treatment is being closely monitored by the HSE. Regular updates are available on website www.hse.ie/coronavirus

Notes:

ACE Inhibitors medicines include Ramipril (e.g. Ramic, Ramilo, Ramitace, Tritace), Perindopril (Coversyl), Lisinopril, Enalapril, Quinapril and Captopril. There are also a number of combination medicines which include ACE inhibitors.

Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers (ARBs) include Losartan, Candesartan, Olmesartan, Telmisartan, Eprosartan, Irbesartan and Valsartan. There are also a number of combination medicines which include ARBs.

References

European Society of Cardiology Statement 13th March 2020:

[https://www.escardio.org/Councils/Council-on-Hypertension-\(CHT\)/News/position-statement-of-the-esc-council-on-hypertension-on-ace-inhibitors-and-ang](https://www.escardio.org/Councils/Council-on-Hypertension-(CHT)/News/position-statement-of-the-esc-council-on-hypertension-on-ace-inhibitors-and-ang)

COVID-19 infection: anti-inflammatory and anti-hypertensive medicines. Health Products Regulatory Authority 16th March 2020: <http://www.hpra.ie/homepage/medicines/news-events/item?t=/covid-19-infection-anti-inflammatory-and-anti-hypertensive-medicines&id=2d2c0d26-9782-6eee-9b55-ff00008c97d0>

Statement from the International Society of Hypertension on COVID-19 <https://ish-world.com/news/a/A-statement-from-the-International-Society-of-Hypertension-on-COVID-19/>
(accessed 17th March)