



PRINZIDE:

ONE KIND OF HYPERTENSION MEDICATION

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

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 hypertension, 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 represents the systolic 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 the diastolic 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:

| blood pressure measurements | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| normal: | 119 / 79 or lower |
| prehypertension: | 120-139 / 80-89 |
| hypertension: | 140 / 90 or higher 130 / 80 if you have diabetes or kidney disease |

What is Prinzide?

Prinzide is a combination pill. Most people with high blood pressure need to take two or more medications to control blood pressure. This medication is a convenient and economical way to get two 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, so talk to your doctor to decide what is best.

How does taking Prinzide lower my blood pressure?

The diuretic hydrochlorothiazide works in the kidneys. It helps your body to get rid of excess water and sodium when you urinate. Having extra fluid in your body can contribute to high blood pressure.

The ACE inhibitor lisinopril 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 Prinzide to help protect yourself from a heart attack and stroke. Ask your doctor or other health care professional for more information about other medications that could help you.

What problems could I have taking Prinzide?

Most people who take this medication do not experience 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 Prinzide.

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 experience difficulty breathing or have an emergency medical condition, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital.*

Because Prinzide combines a diuretic (which may lower potassium) with lisinopril (which may increase potassium), it is unlikely to affect your potassium levels. But your doctor may request a potassium level blood test to be sure.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR MEDICATIONS

Occasionally, especially if you are over 70 years of age, you may have occasional dizziness during the first two weeks taking Prinzide. If this happens to you, you may want to get up slowly or sit down if you feel dizzy. If this symptom is bothersome or does not go away, please speak with your doctor.

How can I reduce the risk of having problems taking Prinzide?

- Do not take Prinzide if you are pregnant or may become pregnant in the near future or if you are breastfeeding.
- If you plan to take Plan B 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. Prinzide controls blood pressure and lowers your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Talking with your doctor about any side effects you have can help you and your doctor choose the medicine and dose that best suits your needs.

How does Prinzide fit into my hypertension treatment?

Prinzide 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 Prinzide by our doctor or other health care professional, 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. It's likely that you may need to take Prinzide for the rest of your life, so work with your doctor to ensure that you are taking the right medicine and dose for you.

What do I need to know about Prinzide?

Take the time to ask your doctor or other health care professional about Prinzide:

- Why am I taking it?
- How often and how long should I take it?
- Are there any special instructions for taking this particular medication?
- Should I only take it at mealtime?
- Are there activities that I should avoid while taking this medication?
- 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 remember to take Prinzide?

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.

- Make a simple chart and post it in an obvious place 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 the beginning of a daily TV show, such as the evening news.
- Use a pillbox that has 7 sections, representing 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 Prinzide or any other medications, connect to our Web site at kp.org, click on the "Get Advice" tab, then click on "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.

*If you have an emergency medical condition, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital. When you have an emergency medical condition, we cover emergency care from Plan providers and non-Plan providers anywhere in the world.

An emergency medical condition is (1) a medical or psychiatric condition that manifests itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain) such that you could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to result in serious jeopardy to your health or serious impairment or dysfunction of your bodily functions or organs; or (2) when you are in active labor and there isn't enough time for safe transfer to a Plan hospital before delivery, or if transfer poses a threat to you or your unborn child's health and safety.

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have further questions, please consult your doctor. If you have questions or need more information about your medication, please speak to your pharmacist. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse any brand names; any similar products may be used.