

Hydralazine

Names

The generic drug name is hydralazine (hye-DRAL-a-zeen). There may be other names for this medication and it is present in a number of brand combination products such as Apresoline-Esidrix® and Hydra-Zide®.

Why am I Taking Hydralazine and How is it Given/Taken?

Hydralazine is in a class of medicines called anti-hypertensives. It is used to treat high blood pressure (hypertension). Your medicine may be given as an injection or taken by mouth as a pill or a solution that would be prepared by your pharmacist. This medication should be taken with meals in order to increase its effectiveness.

How Does it Work?

Hydralazine is a vasodilator; it treats high blood pressure by relaxing your blood vessels so that blood can flow more easily through your body.

What Should I Tell My Doctor Before I Begin?

Tell your doctor if you:

- have had an allergic reaction to hydralazine, or any other medications, foods, preservatives, or dyes
- are pregnant or breastfeeding, or plan to become pregnant
- have had heart or blood vessel disease, stroke, kidney disease, and/or phenylketonuria (PKU is decreased ability to metabolize the amino acid phenylalanine)

This drug may interact with other medications or cause harmful side effects. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, or supplements that you take.

What Are Some Possible Side Effects?

- Redness or flushing of face
- Headache
- Upset stomach, loss of appetite, vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Teary eyes
- Stuffy nose
- Skin rash

How Can I Manage These Side Effects?

- Cover up if going in the sun. Use sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher. Do not use tanning beds. If you get a rash, keep the area clean and dry. Talk to your doctor before using creams of other products on a rash.
- Ask your doctor before taking any over-the-counter medications or supplements for any side effect.

When Should I Call the Doctor?

Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room if you have signs of a severe allergic reaction: Swelling/tingling in your face, mouth, tongue, or throat; chest tightness; trouble breathing; shortness of breath; dizziness; or palpitations (irregular or pounding heartbeat); hives

Call your doctor immediately if you have:

- signs of infection: temperature of 100.4° F (38°C), sore throat, burning/pain when urinating (peeing)
- chest, joint, or muscle pain or muscle cramps
- swelling of feet or lower legs
- swelling of lymph glands
- tingling, pain, weakness, or numbness of the hands and feet

What Else Should I Know About Hydralazine?

- This medicine helps control your blood pressure and you must continue to use it as directed. Untreated hypertension can cause serious problems (heart failure, blood vessel disease, stroke, or kidney disease)
- Talk to your doctor about starting treatment at a low dose, and gradually increasing over time to minimize any unwanted side effects
- This medicine works best if there is a constant amount in the blood. To help keep this amount constant, do not miss any doses and take the medicine at the same times each day. **Take your medicine exactly as directed** and keep your appointments with your doctor even if you feel well.
- If you are taking this medicine as an oral solution, you can mix it with fruit juice or applesauce. Take immediately after mixing. Be sure to take all of the mixture to get the full dose.
- Your treatment may include weight control and dietary changes such as restricting the amount of foods high in sodium (salt).
- If you get pregnant while on hydralazine, call your doctor right away.
- If you would like more information about hydralazine, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.