

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT AMIODARONE

When should it be used?

How should it be used?

What special instructions should I follow while using this drug?

What should I do if I forget to take a dose?

What side effects can this drug cause? What can I do about them?

What other precautions should I follow while using this drug?

When is the medication given?

[Download as PDF](#)

What You Need To Know About Amiodarone

Amiodarone (Cordarone) is used to treat and prevent an irregular heartbeat. It slows down nerve activity in the heart and relaxes an overactive heart.

When should it be used?

Amiodarone is usually taken once or twice a day. Your doctor may start your therapy with more frequent doses and then taper down the dosing. Follow the instructions on your prescription label carefully, and ask your pharmacist or doctor to explain any part that you do not understand.

It is important that you take this medication exactly as your doctor has prescribed. Never stop taking it without consulting your doctor. This medication must be taken regularly for one to three weeks before a response is seen and for several months before the full effect occurs. Due to the drug's long half-life, it will remain in your body for up to two months.

How should it be used?

Amiodarone comes in tablets. Your prescription label tells you how much to take at each dose. Ask your pharmacist any questions you have about refilling your prescription.

What special instructions should I follow while using this drug?

- Keep all appointments with your doctor and the laboratory so that your response to this medication can be monitored. Blood tests, electrocardiograms (EKGs) and chest X-rays may be performed periodically. Your dosage may need to be adjusted (or the drug may be stopped temporarily), depending on your response.



Share this Article

- Follow your doctor's advice on smoking and diet, including beverages containing alcohol and caffeine.
- Cigarettes and beverages that contain caffeine may increase the irritability of your heart and interfere with the action of amiodarone.
- Always have enough of this medication on hand. Check your supply before vacations, holidays, and other times when you may be unable to get more medication.

What should I do if I forget to take a dose?

Skip the missed dose and take only your next regularly scheduled dose. Do not take a double dose.

What side effects can this drug cause? What can I do about them?

- Nausea, vomiting, constipation, loss of appetite, abdominal pain (about 25 percent of patients). Take amiodarone with meals.
- Tremors; lack of coordination or difficulty walking; dizziness, weakness or fatigue; trouble sleeping or sleep disturbances; headache; sexual disturbances; weight loss; abnormal taste or smell; vision problems such as blurred vision, halos around objects, sensitivity to light, dry eyes and corneal microdeposits; flushing; swelling of feet, ankles or lower legs; blue-gray discoloration of the skin (especially face and hands) and sensitivity of skin exposed to sunlight. Call your doctor, especially if these effects are severe or persistent.
- Cough, shortness of breath or painful breathing, swelling of abdomen, irregular or rapid heartbeat Contact your doctor immediately. (These effects can occur even after you stop taking this medication.)
- If you experience any other side effects that you think could be caused by this medication and/or are of concern to you, call your doctor.

What other precautions should I follow while using this drug?

Before taking amiodarone, tell your doctor:

- If you have a history of lung, liver, heart or thyroid disease. Periodic blood work will need to be done to test your liver and thyroid function. You may also be asked to perform a breathing test to measure your pulmonary (lung) function.
- The names of all vitamins, herbals, dietary supplements, nonprescription (over the counter) and other prescription medications you take. Amiodarone can keep many medications from working they way they should.
- If are pregnant or breastfeeding, or if you plan to become pregnant.
- This medication can make your skin more sensitive than usual to sunlight and sunlamps, which could cause a serious burn. This effect may continue for weeks or months after you stop taking amiodarone. If you will be outside for long periods of time, wear protective clothing and use a sunscreen. A burn can occur even through window glass or thin cotton. Also, cover your head if you must go into the sunlight. Sun exposure may make you more likely to develop a blue-gray skin discoloration, which may not go away completely after discontinuing amiodarone. Before having surgery, tell the doctor or dentist in charge that you are taking amiodarone (or if you have taken the drug within the past two months). Do not allow anyone else to take your medication.

When is the medication given?

You will receive the first dose of medication in the evening on the day you are admitted to the hospital. Your doctor will tell you how to take the medication at home.

How should I store this drug?

- Keep this medication in its original container, with the lid tightly closed. Store it at room temperature and protect it from light.
- Keep amiodarone out of the reach of children.
- Never share your medication with anyone.
- Never take outdated medications. Some medication prescription labels list an expiration date. If such a date is not on your medication label or if you are unsure how old a medication is, call your pharmacy.

© Copyright 1995-2018 The Cleveland Clinic Foundation. All rights reserved.

This information is provided by the Cleveland Clinic and is not intended to replace the medical advice of your doctor or healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider for advice about a specific medical condition.

Speak with our Contact Center for assistance

 800 8 2223

 Request An Appointment

