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Diuretics

Diuretics, sometimes called "water pills," are very important in fluid management helping to reduce the amount of water in the body. They work by altering the reabsorption of sodium and chloride into the body, acting on the kidneys to increase the flow of urine. The use of these medications should be done only while under close supervision of a physician.

Diuretics are used to control:

- Hypertension,
- Edema (swelling),
- Congestive heart failure, and
- Ascites (an excess of fluid in the peritoneal cavity (membrane lining of the abdomen) that is typically caused by liver disease).

There are several different types of diuretics. Each is used to treat a particular condition and each has possible side effects. For more specific information, visit the [National Library of Medicine's MedlinePlus](#) Drugs and Supplements information section.

Common side effects of diuretics include:

- Hypotension (low blood pressure),
- Nausea and vomiting
- Stomach cramps and diarrhea
- Dehydration,
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Signs of too much potassium loss (confusion; irregular heartbeat; nervousness; numbness or tingling in hands, feet, or lips; shortness of breath or difficult breathing; unusual tiredness or weakness; weakness or heaviness of legs) and,
- Signs of too little sodium (drowsiness; dryness of mouth; increased thirst; lack of energy)

Because the conditions that merit the use of diuretic medications are serious, it is important to take the medications exactly as prescribed and to immediately consult with your physician or medical professional if you experience side effects.

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