

Clonidine: Important Patient Information

What is Clonidine?

Clonidine is a prescription medication used to treat high blood pressure (hypertension), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and other medical conditions. It works by affecting certain nerve signals in the brain to lower blood pressure and improve focus in individuals with ADHD.

Special Precautions Before Taking Clonidine

Before taking clonidine, inform your healthcare provider about the following:

- **Allergies:** If you are allergic to clonidine or any of its ingredients, or if you have had a skin reaction from clonidine patches.
 - **Medications & Supplements:** Provide a full list of prescription and nonprescription medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements, and herbal products you are taking or planning to take.
 - **Medical Conditions:** Mention any history of:
 - Stroke
 - High or low blood pressure
 - Heart attack or heart rhythm problems
 - Kidney disease
 - Fainting episodes
 - **Pregnancy & Breastfeeding:** Inform your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or currently breastfeeding.
 - **Surgery & Anesthesia:** If you are undergoing surgery, including dental procedures, notify your doctor or dentist that you are taking clonidine.
 - **Drowsiness & Dizziness:** Clonidine may cause drowsiness or dizziness. Avoid driving or operating heavy machinery until you know how the medication affects you.
 - **Alcohol Use:** Alcohol can worsen clonidine's side effects. Ask your doctor about safe alcohol consumption.
 - **Sudden Position Changes:** Clonidine may cause dizziness or fainting when you stand up too quickly. To minimize this, rise slowly from a lying or sitting position.
 - **Dehydration & Overheating:** Staying hydrated and avoiding excessive heat can help prevent fainting while on clonidine.
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Potential Side Effects of Clonidine

Clonidine may cause side effects. Contact your doctor if any of these persist or worsen:

- **Common Side Effects:**

- Dry mouth
- Fatigue or tiredness
- Weakness
- Headache
- Nervousness
- Decreased sexual ability
- Nausea or vomiting
- Constipation
- **Serious Side Effects:** Seek emergency medical attention if you experience:
 - Rash, hives, or swelling (face, throat, lips, tongue, eyes, hands, feet, ankles, or legs)
 - Difficulty swallowing or breathing
 - Hoarseness
 - Fainting
 - Fast or irregular heartbeat
- **Signs of Overdose:** If overdose symptoms occur, call emergency services immediately. Symptoms include:
 - Fainting
 - Slow heart rate
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Shivering
 - Slurred speech
 - Confusion
 - Drowsiness and weakness
 - Cold, pale skin
 - Small pupils (black circles in the eyes)

To report side effects, visit the FDA's MedWatch program at www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch or call 1-800-332-1088.

Drug & Supplement Interactions

Clonidine can interact with other medications and supplements. Inform your doctor if you take any of the following:

- **Blood Pressure & Heart Medications:** Beta-blockers (e.g., propranolol, metoprolol), calcium channel blockers (e.g., verapamil, diltiazem), and diuretics (e.g., hydrochlorothiazide) may enhance clonidine's effects, potentially lowering blood pressure excessively.
- **CNS Depressants:** Medications that cause drowsiness, including benzodiazepines (e.g., diazepam, lorazepam), opioids (e.g., oxycodone, morphine), and sleep aids (e.g., zolpidem), may intensify sedation and dizziness.

- **Antidepressants:** Certain antidepressants, including tricyclic antidepressants (e.g., amitriptyline) and SSRIs (e.g., fluoxetine), may reduce clonidine's effectiveness or increase side effects.
 - **Stimulants for ADHD:** Combining clonidine with stimulant medications (e.g., Adderall, Ritalin) should be done cautiously under medical supervision to avoid blood pressure fluctuations.
 - **Antipsychotics:** Some medications for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder (e.g., quetiapine, risperidone) may interact with clonidine, causing low blood pressure and increased sedation.
 - **Alcohol & Recreational Drugs:** Alcohol and cannabis can intensify dizziness, drowsiness, and low blood pressure.
 - **Herbal & Nutritional Supplements:**
 - **Melatonin & Valerian Root:** May increase drowsiness and dizziness.
 - **St. John's Wort:** May reduce clonidine's effectiveness.
 - **Potassium Supplements & Salt Substitutes:** May interact with blood pressure medications, leading to imbalances.
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Important Safety Information

- **Do Not Stop Clonidine Suddenly:** Abruptly stopping clonidine can cause a rapid increase in blood pressure (rebound hypertension), anxiety, agitation, and other withdrawal symptoms. Always taper off under a doctor's guidance.
- **Medication Compliance:** Take clonidine exactly as prescribed. Missing doses or taking extra doses can lead to serious health risks.
- **Emergency Situations:** If you experience severe dizziness, fainting, or breathing difficulties, seek immediate medical attention.
- **Consult Your Doctor for Any Concerns:** If you experience new or worsening symptoms, contact your healthcare provider before making any changes to your medication.