



Milrinone Patient Education Sheet

What is milrinone?

Milrinone is a vasodilator that works by relaxing the muscles in your blood vessels to help them dilate (widen). This lowers blood pressure and allows blood to flow more easily through your veins and arteries. Patients with severe heart failure are given milrinone to decrease the heart's work load and improve their symptoms.

In a hospital setting, milrinone is often used as a short-term treatment of life-threatening heart failure.

In a home setting, milrinone is often given for longer periods of time as a palliative measure to help control the symptoms of end-stage heart failure. Sometimes patients awaiting a heart transplant are given milrinone until a donor heart becomes available.

Milrinone is given as a continuous infusion. When given in the home setting, you and a willing caregiver who is living in the home, must learn how to manage the infusion (change the medication bag, troubleshoot the IV pump, and identify when a problem is occurring). Your home health nurse will teach you what you need to know about your infusion.

What are the possible side effects of milrinone?

Get emergency medical help if you have any of these signs of an allergic reaction:

- hives
- difficulty breathing
- swelling of your face, lips, tongue, or throat

Tell your caregivers at once if you have a serious side effect such as:

- chest pain
- feeling like you might pass out
- bronchospasm (wheezing, chest tightness, trouble breathing)
- low potassium (confusion, uneven heart rate, extreme thirst, increased urination, leg discomfort, muscle weakness or limp feeling)

Less serious side effects may include:

- headache
- tremors
- easy bruising or bleeding

What is the most important information I should know about milrinone?

In an emergency situation, it may not be possible to tell your caregivers about any health conditions you have before you are treated. However, make sure any doctor caring for you after you are treated knows that you have received this medication.

While receiving milrinone, tell your caregivers at once if you have a serious side effect such as chest pain, feeling like you might pass out, wheezing or trouble breathing, confusion, uneven heart rate, extreme thirst, increased urination, leg discomfort, or muscle weakness.

While receiving milrinone, it is extremely important that your infusion of milrinone not be interrupted. Your home health nurse will teach you how to change your medication bag, how to change your pump battery with every bag

change in case of electrical outage, and how to troubleshoot any issues that might occur.

If your milrinone stops infusing it is possible that you will experience sudden and severe symptoms of heart failure. If you are not able to promptly restart the infusion, you or your caregiver must initiate your community's Emergency Medical System by calling 911 immediately.

How is milrinone given?

Milrinone is given as a continuous infusion through a needle placed into a vein. You will initially receive this infusion in a clinic or hospital setting.

Your heart rate and blood pressure will be monitored intermittently by the home care nurse while you are being treated with milrinone. Your kidney function and electrolytes may also need to be checked with blood tests. The home health nurse will maintain contact with your prescribing physician and monitor you per your doctor's instructions.

What happens if I miss a dose of milrinone?

Since milrinone is given via continuous intravenous infusion, you are not likely to miss a dose. However, sometimes an infusion can be interrupted due to position of the arm, pump malfunction, electricity outage or other reasons. Your home health nurse will teach you and a caregiver how to troubleshoot your infusion, but if the infusion cannot be restarted within a few minutes, you should activate your community's emergency medical services by dialing 911.

What happens if I overdose on milrinone?

Tell your caregivers right away if you think you have received too much of this medicine. Overdose can cause severe dizziness or fainting.

What signs and symptoms of heart failure should I be watching for while taking milrinone?

Your nurse will teach you to monitor your weight every day. Weight gain of 3 or more pounds in a day or 5 or more pounds in a week can be a sign of fluid build-up and must be reported to your visiting nurse or doctor. In some cases, your nurse may recommend installing telehealth equipment so that your vital signs can be more closely monitored.

What should I avoid after receiving milrinone?

Follow your doctor's instructions about any restrictions on food, beverages, or activity after your treatment with milrinone. While receiving milrinone do not start any new medications or change the dose or frequency of any existing medications without first speaking with your doctor.

What other drugs will affect milrinone?

Tell your doctor about all other medications you use, especially:

- digoxin (digitalis, Lanoxin, Lanoxicaps)
- diuretic (water pill)

This list is not complete and there may be other drugs that can interact with milrinone. Tell your doctor about all your prescription and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, minerals, herbal products, and drugs prescribed by other doctors. Do not start a new medication without telling your doctor.

Home Health VNA wants to be your partner as you manage your heart failure. Call our main number at 1-800-933-5593 if you have any questions or concerns about your milrinone treatment.