

BEST MEDICAL THERAPY
BY SR ANNETTE ANDERSON (M.CUR)

The best medical therapy for patients with vascular disease is tailor made for each patient's condition, medical history and allergies. However, this is a brief description of medications which might be prescribed and the reasoning behind it.

Antiplatelet therapy:

Antiplatelet therapy like Aspirin and clopidogrel is essential for preventing clots in the presence of atherosclerotic disease associated with peripheral vascular disease, angina, heart attack or some strokes.

Vitamin K antagonist anticoagulant:

Warfarin is an old drug which is still effectively used for the treatment of Deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary emboli. Other drugs in this group include Coumadin and Jantoven. Although it is a cheap and affordable option of many patients, it is labour intensive as it requires regular blood levels to be taken which dictates the amount of heparin to be used. Patients need to also watch their diet, as many foods can increase or decrease the effectiveness of Warfarin.

Direct Oral Anticoagulants (DOACs)

This is a newer class of anticoagulants which is often used in the place of warfarin. Apixaban (Eliquis), Rivaroxaban (Xarelto) and Edoxaban (Savaysa) are examples of Factor Xa inhibitors which Dabigatran (Pradaxa) is a direct thrombin inhibitor. They work similarly to Warfarin but require less monitoring, have a faster onset and are less affected by food interactions.

Heparins:

These drugs are injectables which are submitted subcutaneously and can and are used for immediate effect or to bridge oral medications. Examples include Enoxaparin (Lovenox or Clexane) and Dalteparin (Fragmin)

Statins:

Statins are drugs which help to slow down the progression of atherosclerosis plaque formation and progression and is important in the management of high cholesterol.

Antihypertensives:

Antihypertensive drugs such as ACE inhibitors help to manage blood pressure, which is a major factor in stroke, but a low blood pressure and worsen peripheral vascular disease, so the correct dose of the correct drug is critical and needs to be managed and adjusted by your doctor. Buying a blood pressure monitor for home and measuring your

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blood pressure regularly, recording the results is a good way to monitor your blood pressure and can be very helpful to your doctor.

Health lifestyle:

Please look at our healthy lifestyle information for more in-depth information.

- **Exercise:** Supervised walking programs improve blood flow and function in PAD.
- **Diet:** Focus on fruits, veggies, whole grains; limit sugar, salt, saturated fats.
- **Smoking Cessation:** Critical for reducing vascular risk.



Picture credited to Anna Shvets