

In this session, we will be discussing the consumer medication information for amiodarone, trade name Cordarone™, and Pacerone™

### What it's for & How to take

Amiodarone is used to treat patients with an abnormal heartbeat. When your heart has an abnormal beat, you are more likely to develop a blood clot. Blood clots get stuck in your legs, lungs, heart or brain which may lead to a life-threatening emergency.

Amiodarone may slow down how fast and how strong your heart may beat. By doing this, the abnormal heart beat is decreased. This category of medications help keep a heartbeat regular and steady.

Amiodarone is usually taken 1 or 2 times daily. This medication may be taken with or without food, but try to take it the same way each time. Take your dose at the same time each day to get the best results.

Your doctor may start you on a higher dose, and then slowly decrease your dose after your heartbeat is normal.

Do not stop taking this medication or change the dose without talking with your doctor. If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If it is near the time of your next dose, skip it and continue with your normal dose time. Do not take a double dose to make up the missed dose.

### Most Important Warnings

- Amiodarone should only be used when the abnormal heartbeat is life-threatening. This medication should be started on a patient when they are in a hospital to make sure they tolerate the side effects.
- Ten percent of the patients that take this medication will develop pneumonia, and in some cases, this may cause death.
- Mild liver toxicity is common with this medication. Liver function should be monitored regularly.
- The abnormal heartbeat will get worse in 2-5% of the patients who take this medication.

### Other Warnings & Cautions

- Rarely, amiodarone may cause your heart to beat fast and unsteady. If you feel any severe dizziness or feel like your heart is racing or beating too fast, get medical help right away.
- Avoid eating grapefruit or drinking grapefruit juice while taking amiodarone. Grapefruit may increase the level of this medication in your body and cause dangerous side effects.
- Amiodarone has been known to rarely cause thyroid problems, either increasing or decreasing the thyroid. If you have any symptoms, such as cold or heat sensitivity, unexplained weight gain or loss, thinning hair or a lump in the front of the neck, call your doctor.
- You are more likely to get a sunburn while taking this medication. If you can't stay out of the sun, cover up with clothing and sunscreen.
- Amiodarone may cause vision problems. Call your doctor if you have any problems with your eyes. Be sure to have your yearly visit with your eye doctor.
- The elderly may be more sensitive to the side effects of this medication, especially the drowsiness and dizziness. The chances of loss of balance and falling are increased.

**TERMS OF USE:** These recordings are meant to supplement your knowledge and understanding of your medications and are not a replacement for counseling with your pharmacist or doctor. This information does not allow you to take a prescription medication that was not prescribed for you. Talk with your pharmacist or doctor before taking your medication and if you have any questions regarding your medication. **All information provided "as-is" and with no express or implied warranties, including warranties directed to accuracy, non-infringement of any proprietary rights or a third party or fitness for a particular purpose.**

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## Amiodarone (Cordarone™, Pacerone™)

- This medication may make you dizzy, drowsy, or blur your vision. Do not drive or do any activity that requires focus and attention until you are sure you can do them safely. Limit alcoholic beverages while taking amiodarone.
- Talk with your doctor about the risks of taking this medication if you are pregnant or might become pregnant. Breastfeeding is not recommended while taking this medication.

### Interactions & Side Effects

- Tell your pharmacist or doctor all your medication allergies so they may determine if amiodarone is safe for you to take.
- Avoid dangerous drug interactions. Some medications, such as water pills, may increase the chance that you have an abnormal heartbeat. Tell your pharmacist or doctor all the other medication you are taking, including over the counter supplements, even if you don't take them very often.
- Ask your doctor if this medication is safe to take with your current health conditions. Tell your doctor if you have a history of heart, liver, kidney or thyroid disease.
- While taking amiodarone, you may feel some nausea, loss of appetite, dizziness, headache, anxiety or constipation. If these or any other unwanted side effects persist, contact your doctor or pharmacist to talk about it with them.
- Call your doctor right away if you have any severe vomiting, yellowing of your eyes, swelling in the ankles, shortness of breath or signs of infection such as a fever or sore throat.
- Call emergency 911 if you have any symptoms of a heart attack such as chest and left arm pain, shortness of breath and sweating or if you have symptoms of a stroke such as weakness on one side of your body, slurred speech, sudden vision changes, and confusion.

If you have any questions about what you have heard, contact your pharmacist or doctor. This session does not include all the potential interactions or side effects that this medication may cause. Ask your pharmacist how your medication should be stored and how you should dispose of it when you are done taking it. Do not share your medication with anyone, ever. Remember, this is not meant to replace your counseling session with your pharmacist. In case of overdose, call your local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222.

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