

OREGON HEALTH POLICY AND RESEARCH

Health Resources Commission

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Oregon's Evidence-Based Drug Review: Beta Adrenergic Blockers (β-Blockers)

β-Blockers are used to treat high blood pressure, heart disease, congestive heart failure, and to prevent migraine headaches. Rarely, β-Blockers are used to prevent bleeding from the esophagus. β-Blockers compete with adrenaline at receptor sites throughout the body.

Which drugs were included in the review?

The 2003 Oregon Legislature directed the Health Resources Commission to report on the effectiveness of medications prescribed for common conditions. This review examined the following oral β-Blockers. (It did not review B-blockers in fixed combination with other drugs.)

• atenolol	(generic, TENORIN)	• metoprolol succinate ER	(TOPROL XL)
• bisoprolol	(generic, ZEBETA)	• nadolol	(CORCARD)
• carteolol	(generic, CARTOL)	• penbutolol	(LEVATOL)
• carvedilol	(COREG)	• pindolol	(VISKEN)
• labetalol	(generic, NORMODYNE)	• propranolol IR	(generic, INDERAL)
• metoprolol tartrate IR	(generic, LOPRESSOR)	• propranolol LA	(INDERAL LA)

What do these drugs have in common?

- All of the medicines listed above are **equally effective** in controlling high blood pressure.
- No difference among β-Blockers exists for side effects related to age, gender, or race.

What are the key differences?

- People with congestive heart failure, heart disease, or migraines, should consult with your doctor about the preferred β-Blocker.

The next time you see your health care practitioner, ask:

- Am I taking the most effective drug for my condition?
- Are there alternative medications that are equally effective?
- Are there effective alternatives that are less costly?
- Will this drug interact with other medications I'm taking?