

Benazepril

Benazepril is a member of a class of medications called *angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors*, or simply *ACE inhibitors*. These are *vasodilators*, agents which cause blood vessels throughout the body to relax (dilate). By decreasing the pressure inside blood vessels, the amount of work required by the heart to pump blood through the blood vessels is reduced. In addition, ACE inhibitors reduce the amount of sodium and water that are retained by the kidneys.

ACE inhibitors are most commonly used in the treatment of heart disease and congestive heart failure. Prior to development of heart failure, they may help to delay its onset for some conditions. Once heart failure occurs, ACE inhibitors play an important role in cardiac therapy. Specifically, they help to resolve heart failure, increase the time until heart failure recurs, and increase survival time following development of heart failure.

As a vasodilator, benazepril is also useful in the treatment of systemic arterial hypertension (high blood pressure). For this purpose, it may be used either alone or in conjunction with another anti-hypertensive drug (typically a medication called amlodipine). Benazepril is also used to treat certain types of kidney disease.

Before beginning therapy with benazepril (and other ACE inhibitors), blood work is performed in order to obtain baseline information regarding kidney function and electrolytes. Approximately 4-5 days after therapy is initiated and periodically thereafter, blood work should be repeated in order to monitor kidney values and potassium levels, both of which occasionally become elevated during therapy with ACE inhibitors. If systemic hypertension is the condition being treated, periodic blood pressure measurement is performed to assess initial and ongoing response to therapy.

Benazepril is generally very well tolerated. Side effects are uncommon but may occasionally occur as a result of excessive lowering of blood pressure and specific changes in blood flow to the kidneys. Symptoms can include lethargy, weakness, loss of appetite, and rarely vomiting. If any of these symptoms are noted, or if you have any questions or concerns, please contact your veterinarian or Veterinary Specialty Services immediately to discuss an appropriate plan.