

Drug Information Table

Direct acting vasodilators – hydralazine

Therapeutic Use	Administration	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate to severe hypotension Hypertensive crisis (IV form) Used with digitalis and other vasodilators to treat heart failure on a short-term basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available in oral, IM, or IV forms Give oral dose with food to enhance effectiveness Oral dosage usually begins low and is gradually increased Administer IV form undiluted; do not add to other solutions 	
Side/Adverse Effects	Interventions	Patient Instructions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headache and palpitations (especially in first few hours following first dose, and usually subsiding spontaneously) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise patient this headache and palpitations can occur following first dose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headache and palpitations can occur 2 to 4 hr following first dose; notify provider if these do not subside on their own. Plan to perform quiet, nonhazardous activities following first dose of drug Beginning with a low dose will minimize first-dose effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tachycardia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor pulse and report tachycardia A beta blocker can be added to decrease tachycardia; watch for hypotension with additional antihypertensive agent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report rapid heartbeat to provider Avoid strenuous or hazardous activity until effects are known
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE)-like syndrome can occur (facial rash, joint pain, fever, nephritis, pericarditis) — most likely with high doses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and report signs of facial rash, joint pain, or fatigue to provider (hydralazine will be discontinued) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report facial rash, joint pain, unexplained fever, chest pain, or fatigue to provider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluid retention, edema 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor for edema, crackles in lungs Hydralazine can be combined with a diuretic to minimize this effect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report edema to provider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abrupt withdrawal can cause hypertensive crisis and heart failure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taper hydralazine slowly when discontinued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not abruptly stop taking this drug
Contraindications	Precautions	Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitral valve dysfunction caused by rheumatic heart disease Myocardial infarction Tachycardia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coronary heart disease Stroke Renal dysfunction Systemic lupus erythematosus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MAOI antidepressants can cause severe hypotension Other antihypertensive drugs can cause hypotension