

Beta-blockers

Beta-adrenoceptor blocking drugs. Oxyprenolol, pindolol, acebutolol, celiprolol, atenolol, celiprolol, nadolol...

... sotalol, labetalol, carvedilol, nebivolol, betaxolol, bisoprolol, metoprolol, timolol, propranolol, esmolol.

Beta-blockers are used to treat a range of ailments associated with anxiety and tension, such as high blood pressure, angina, irregular heart rhythms, migraines, prevention of a second heart attack, tremors, [alcohol](#) withdrawal, anxiety and glaucoma. In 2000, over 18 million prescriptions of the drugs were made.

They work by blocking the receptors for the fight or flight response. Beta-receptors are found in a number of places in the body, such as the heart, lung, arteries, [brain](#) and uterus. Different beta-blockers tend to affect different areas, with some more appropriate for treating blood pressure and others anxiety, without necessarily affecting performance.

Their ability to relieve anxiety led to their non-medical use. Students when cramming for exams and performers before going on stage are known to use them for their ability to relieve anxiety. Competitors in sports that require a steady arm such as snooker and darts have also been linked to its use, culminating in threats of competitive drug testing.

[Tolerance](#) can develop with regular use to the extent that stopping them can cause problems - exaggerating the original symptoms, which in the case of high blood pressure can prove fatal. Those with asthma and low blood pressure in particular should avoid beta-blockers.

Updated January 2006