

May 12, 2012

Dear _____ patient _____,

As we discussed in the office, we have started you on some new medications. All of these categories of medications reduce the risk of stroke, heart attack and vascular death in patients with peripheral arterial disease (PAD), carotid artery disease and aneurysmal disease.

_____ **Aspirin** is one of a class of medications called “anti-platelet therapy”. Aspirin is typically used to treat pain. At low doses, aspirin also makes atherosclerotic plaques (cholesterol build-up in blood vessels) more stable, so they are less likely to break apart and cause heart attacks or stroke. It is important to notify our office or your primary doctor if you develop any bleeding problems.

_____ **Benazepril** is one of a class of medications called “ACE-inhibitors”. ACE-inhibitors are typically used to lower blood pressure. ACE-inhibitors also make atherosclerotic plaques (cholesterol build-up in blood vessels) more stable, so they are less likely to break apart and cause heart attacks or stroke. This occurs even in patients with normal blood pressure levels. Therefore, all people with vascular disease benefit from taking an ace inhibitor. It is important to notify our office or your primary doctor if you develop a cough or severe swelling.

_____ **Metoprolol** is on one of a class of medications called “beta blockers”. Beta blockers work by stabilizing the heart. They lower blood pressure and slow pulse rate. The protective effect occurs even in people with normal blood pressure levels. Therefore, all people with PAD and /or aneurysmal disease benefit from taking a beta blocker. It is important to notify our office or primary doctor if you develop light-headedness or fainting after starting metoprolol.

_____ **Simvastatin** is one of a class of medications called “statins”. This medicine works by lowering low density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol. Statins also make atherosclerotic plaques (cholesterol build-up in blood vessels) more stable, so they are less likely to break apart and cause heart attack or stroke. This occurs even in people with normal cholesterol levels. Therefore, all people with PAD benefit from taking a statin. We are also sending a letter to your primary care physician to ask him or her to order an important blood test in four to six weeks. This test will measure how well your liver is working. In a small number of patients, statins can affect liver function. Also, it is important to notify our office or your primary doctor if you develop severe muscle aches after starting simvastatin.



This initiative to optimize anti-platelet, ACE-inhibitor, statin and beta-blocker therapy use in patients with vascular disease is a component of the **Southern California Vascular Outcomes Improvement Collaborative (So Cal VOICE)**, in which I am a member and active participant. The So Cal VOICE is a regional voluntary cooperative group of vascular disease specialists dedicated to improving outcomes and advancing the care of vascular patients. Our regional group is part of a national network of quality improvement organizations sponsored by the Society for Vascular Surgery.

We are also sending a letter to your primary care physician to inform him or her of your new medications. As always, if you have any questions please contact our office at _____, and we would be happy to speak with you.

Sincerely,



<http://www.vascularweb.org/regionalgroups/VOICE/Pages/Participating-Hospitals.aspx>
<http://www.vascularqualityinitiative.org/>