

EPOPROSTENOL (Caripul®)

What is epoprostenol (Caripul®) used for?

Epoprostenol (Caripul®) is a prescription medicine used to treat **pulmonary arterial hypertension** (PAH). PAH is defined by high blood pressure in the lungs resulting from the pulmonary arteries—the blood vessels that carry blood from the heart to the lungs—becoming narrowed or scarred.

How does it work?

Epoprostenol (Caripul®) is a **prostacyclin analogue**. Prostacyclin analogues are pulmonary vasodilators that can open up pulmonary arteries and reduce pulmonary arterial pressure, as well as improve right-side heart function. Prostacyclin analogues also slow cell multiplication (they are anti-proliferative) and decrease blood clot formation (they are anti-platelet).

Taking this medication may improve your symptoms and your ability to exercise.

What do I need to know?

Do not take epoprostenol (Caripul®) if you:

- Are allergic to epoprostenol (Caripul®) or any of its ingredients
- Develop fluid buildup in your lungs (pulmonary edema) when you begin taking epoprostenol (Caripul®).
- Have heart failure due to severe left ventricular systolic dysfunction.

Your medical team may request regular blood tests.

It is not known if epoprostenol (Caripul®) affects fertility, causes birth defects, or is excreted in breast milk. **If you are pregnant or may become pregnant, contact your medical team right away.**

Always carry an emergency pump and supplies with you, along with contact information for your pulmonary hypertension clinic.

Epoprostenol (Caripul®) involves significant lifestyle adjustments. For example, you must

avoid immersion in water (e.g., baths or swimming). X-rays and airport scanners can cause the pump to malfunction, so ask for a hand inspection. Your medical team will help you plan and adjust.

How should I take epoprostenol (Caripul®)?

Epoprostenol (Caripul®) is delivered intravenously through a portable infusion pump that uses a catheter (tube) inserted into a vein. Your health care team will show you how to prepare and use epoprostenol (Caripul®).

Epoprostenol (Caripul®) powder is reconstituted with sterile water or sodium chloride 0.9% for injection. Do not mix it with other medications.

Ensure clean technique with every change or mix.

Discard any epoprostenol (Caripul®) solution that is discoloured or has visible particles.

Epoprostenol (Caripul®) wears off within minutes, so a backup pump and mixed cassette are required at all times.

The infusion rate you need will probably increase over time. **Changing the infusion rate or stopping epoprostenol (Caripul®) can cause serious harm or death. Do not change the infusion rate or stop taking epoprostenol (Caripul®) unless advised by your medical team. Only you or someone trained by your clinic should ever touch your pump.**

What are common side effects?

Some patients may experience side effects when taking this medication. If the side effects are severe or bothersome, please contact your medical team.

Side effects may include:

- Low blood pressure
- Fatigue
- Flushing
- Headache
- Nausea, cramps, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Skin sensitivity

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- Jaw pain, muscle pain (myalgia), or joint pain
- Anxiety or agitation
- Dizziness
- Chills, fever, or flu-like symptoms
- Infection at the catheter site.

Drug interactions

The following drugs may interact with epoprostenol (Caripul®):

- Diuretics (“water pills”)
- Blood pressure medications (antihypertensives)
- Medications used to prevent or dissolve blood clots
- Other vasodilators
- Medications used for heart disease, heart failure, and chest pain (angina)
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen sodium.

This is not a comprehensive list of drug interactions.

Tell your medical team about ALL the medicines you are taking, including over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, minerals, natural supplements, and alternative medications.

Speak to your medical team before starting any new medication.

When should I notify my pulmonary hypertension clinic or seek medical attention?

Go to the hospital Emergency Department immediately if you develop:

- Sudden return of PAH symptoms
- Abrupt infusion interruption
- Problems with the infusion pump or line

- Symptoms of infection, such as warmth or swelling at the infusion line site, chills, and fever.

Contact your medical team or seek medical attention immediately if you develop:

Symptoms of worsening pulmonary hypertension:

- Difficulty breathing
- Fluid retention or weight gain
- Dizziness or passing out

An allergic reaction:

- Swelling of the mouth, tongue, face, or throat
- Itching
- Rash
- Difficulty breathing.

Symptoms of low blood pressure:

- Feeling faint or lightheaded.

Additional information

- Store out of reach of children.
- Store vials at 15°–30° C. Store prepared infusion cassettes in the refrigerator.
- Do not freeze.
- Do not expose to direct sunlight.
- Do not use expired medication.
- Ask your pharmacist how to dispose of medications you no longer require. Do not throw away any medication or flush it down the toilet.

For more information, please see [the full product monograph](#).



PULMONARY HYPERTENSION
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

L'ASSOCIATION D'HYPERTENSION
PULMONAIRE DU CANADA

To learn more about pulmonary arterial hypertension, please visit www.phacanada.ca

The information provided in this resource is for educational purposes only. Please speak with your medical team to establish a personalized treatment plan and discuss any changes to your lifestyle or course of treatment.