

Direct Vasodilators

Mechanism of action: act on peripheral arteries causing them to dilate

Drug names:

- Hydralazine (Apresoline)
- Minoxidil

Side effects:

- *high incidence of side effects*
- Tachycardia
- Hypernatremia

Adverse effects:

- Minoxidil can cause Steven-Johnson syndrome

Nursing Considerations:

- Check blood pressure before administration. If blood pressure is less than 90/60 mmHg, do not administer the medication
- Record a baseline weight
- Monitor heart rate and report an increase of more than 20 bpm
- Monitor for fluid retention and edema formation
- Report a weight gain of 3 pounds or more in one week
- Teach patients to avoid suddenly stopping these medications- should be discontinued gradually