Norepinephrine

MEDICATION

THE DRUG

Class: Vasopressor — alpha/beta adrenergic agonist (Levophed)

How it works: Causes vasoconstriction; increases heart rate and respiratory rate

Also increases glucose release (guidelines action profile)

USE IT FOR

- Shock patients not responsive to a fluid bolus of at least 20 mL/kg

DON'T GIVE / CAUTION

- Contraindication: allergy to sulfites
- Must have an adequate IV established — extravasation can cause vein necrosis
- Monitor for hypertension

DOSE

Adult: [not in guidelines entry — verify]
Peds: [not in guidelines entry — verify]
Repeat: [not in guidelines entry — verify]

WATCH FOR

- Ischemic injury
- Bradycardia; arrhythmia
- Anxiety
- Headache
- Respiratory distress

PEARLS

- Cardiogenic shock with signs of pulmonary edema should receive dopamine instead (guidelines)
- Protect the IV site — extravasation is this drug's practical trap

Take Home Message:

Norepinephrine is the vasopressor for shock still hypotensive after at least a 20 mL/kg fluid bolus — protect the IV.