Labetalol

MEDICATION

THE DRUG

Class: Antihypertensive

Mechanism: selective, competitive alpha1-adrenergic antagonism plus non-selective beta (B1 and B2) blockade in a single agent

USE IT FOR

- Severe hypertension — systolic BP 220 or greater, OR diastolic BP 120 or greater

DON'T GIVE / CAUTION

- Hypersensitivity; bronchial asthma; heart block
- Cardiogenic shock; bradycardia; hypotension
- Do not give in the same line as Lasix (furosemide)

DOSE

Adult: 20 mg slow IV push over 2 min — Medical Control orders only

Peds: Refer to Handtevy

Repeat: Medical Control orders only

WATCH FOR

- Neurologic: headache, dizziness; vertigo, fatigue
- GI: nausea, dyspepsia
- Respiratory: dyspnea
- Nasal congestion; orthostatic hypotension

PEARLS

- Two manual BPs taken 5 minutes apart before giving
- Pain and anxiety addressed first; BP continuously monitored
- Usually well tolerated — adverse effects typically mild and transient
- Symptomatic postural hypotension if the patient stands too quickly

Take Home Message:

Labetalol is for severe hypertension (SBP ≥220 or DBP ≥120), Medical Control orders only — two manual BPs first, and never in the same line as Lasix.