Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Verapamil

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Calan SR [DSC]; Verelan; Verelan PM

Brand Names: Canada

APO-Verap; Isoptin SR; MYLAN-Verapamil; MYLAN-Verapamil SR; PMS-Verapamil SR [DSC]

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat high blood pressure.
- It is used to treat certain types of abnormal heartbeats.
- It is used to treat some types of chest pain (angina).
- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have any of these health problems: Heart failure (weak heart); certain types of abnormal heartbeats like heart block, Lown-Ganong-Levine syndrome, sick sinus syndrome, or Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome; low blood pressure; or a slow heartbeat.

- If you are taking any of these drugs: Dofetilide, ivabradine, or quinidine.
- If you are taking a beta blocker like atenolol, metoprolol, or propranolol.
- If you have taken disopyramide or flibanserin in the last 48 hours.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Avoid driving and doing other tasks or actions that call for you to be alert until you see how this drug affects you.
- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, rise slowly if you have been sitting or lying down. Be careful going up and down stairs.
- Check blood pressure and heart rate as the doctor has told you.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- If you are taking this drug and have high blood pressure, talk with your doctor before using OTC products that may raise blood pressure. These include cough or cold drugs, diet pills, stimulants, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen or naproxen, and some natural products or aids.
- Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol.
- If you drink grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit often, talk with your doctor.

- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant or plan on getting pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of using this drug while you are pregnant.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Slow heartbeat.
- An abnormal heartbeat that is new or worse.
- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Dizziness or headache.
- Constipation.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

Regular-release tablets:

- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- Some strengths of the tablets may have a score line. If needed for your dose, these tablets may be split in half. If splitting the tablets, only split on the score line.

Long-acting tablets:

- Take this drug with food.
- Take in the morning if taking once a day.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew or crush.
- Some products may be broken in half. If you are not sure if you can break this product in half, talk with the doctor.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

Long-acting capsules:

- Some products are to be taken at bedtime. For some products it does not matter. Check with your pharmacist about how to take this drug.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew or crush.
- If you cannot swallow this drug whole, you may sprinkle the contents on applesauce. If you do this, swallow the mixture right away without chewing.
- Do not mix with hot applesauce.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

Injection:

- It is given into a vein for a period of time.

What do I do if I miss a dose?
All oral products:

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

Injection:

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?
All oral products:

- Store at room temperature protected from light. Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

Regular-release tablets:

- If you split the tablets, you may need to throw them away after a certain amount of time. Be sure you know how long you can store the split tablets. If you are not sure, call the pharmacist.

Injection:

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

All products:

- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else’s drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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