PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Verapamil

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ 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 PM [DSC]; Verelan [DSC]

Brand Names: Canada

AA-Verap; Isoptin SR; MYLAN-Verapamil SR; MYLAN-Verapamil [DSC]

What is this drug used for?

Regular-release tablets:

- It is used to treat high blood pressure.
- It is used to treat some types of chest pain (angina).

Injection and tablet:

- It is used to treat certain types of abnormal heartbeats.
- It may be given to your child for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

All long-acting products:

- If your child has been given this form of this drug, talk with the doctor for information about the benefits and risks. Talk with the doctor if you have questions or concerns about giving this drug to your child.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child has 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 your child is taking any of these drugs: Dofetilide, ivabradine, or quinidine.
- If your child is taking a beta blocker like atenolol, metoprolol, or propranolol.
- If your child has taken disopyramide in the last 48 hours.

If your child is breast-feeding a baby:

- Be sure your child does not breast-feed a baby while taking this drug.

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

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

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- Have your child avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness until you see how this drug affects your child. These are things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy

cars, or motorized vehicles.

- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, have your child rise slowly if your child has been sitting or lying down. Have your child be careful going up and down stairs.
- Have your child's blood pressure and heart rate checked often.
- Have your child's blood work checked often. Talk with your child's doctor.
- If your child drinks grapefruit juice or eats grapefruit often, talk with your child's doctor.
- If your child is taking this drug and has high blood pressure, talk with the doctor before giving 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.
- Alcohol may interact with this drug. Be sure your child does not drink alcohol.

If your child is pregnant:

- Tell the doctor if your child is pregnant or becomes pregnant. You will need to talk about the benefits and risks of your child using this drug while pregnant.

What are some side effects that I need to call my child's 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 child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has 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 child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child 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 child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

Regular-release tablets:

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

Injection:

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

What do I do if my child misses a dose?
Regular-release tablets:

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

Injection:

- Call your child's doctor to find out what to do.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?
Regular-release tablets:

- Store at room temperature protected from light. Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- 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 child's 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 child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's 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.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

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

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