



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Nicardipine

### **Brand Names: US**

Cardene IV

### **What is this drug used for?**

- It is used to treat high blood pressure.
- It is used to treat chest pain or pressure.
- 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 have an allergy to nicardipine or any other part of this drug.
- If you are allergic to any drugs like this one, any other drugs, foods, or other substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had, like rash; hives; itching; shortness of breath; wheezing; cough; swelling of face, lips, tongue, or throat; or any other signs.
- If you have narrowing of the main artery from the heart (aorta) or very narrow heart valve (aortic stenosis).
- 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. Talk with the doctor.
- 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, ibuprofen or like products, and some natural products or aids.

- Talk with your doctor before you drink alcohol.
- This drug may affect how much of some other drugs are in your body. If you are taking other drugs, talk with your doctor. You may need to have your blood work checked more closely while taking this drug with your other drugs.
- 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:

#### **All products:**

- 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.

- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- A heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- A fast heartbeat.
- Chest pain that is new or worse.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.

### **Injection:**

- This drug may irritate the vein. If the drug leaks from the vein, it may also cause irritation around that area. Tell your nurse if you have any redness, burning, pain, swelling, or leaking of fluid where the drug is going into your body.

### **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:

### **All products:**

- Dizziness.
- Flushing.
- Headache.
- Feeling tired or weak.

### **Injection:**

- Upset stomach or throwing up.

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.

### **How is this drug best taken?**

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

### **All oral products:**

- Take with or without food.
- To gain the most benefit, do not miss doses.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

### **Long-acting products:**

- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.

### **Injection:**

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over 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.
- Protect from light.
- Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.

### **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.
- Keep a list of all your drugs (prescription, natural products, vitamins, OTC) with you. Give this list to your doctor.
- Talk with the doctor before starting any new drug, including prescription or OTC, natural products, or vitamins.
- 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.
- 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 information should not be used to decide whether or not to take this medicine or any other medicine. Only the healthcare provider has the knowledge and training to decide which medicines are right for a specific patient. This information does not endorse any medicine as safe, effective, or approved for treating any patient or health condition. This is only a brief summary of general information about this medicine. It does NOT include all information about the possible uses, directions, warnings, precautions, interactions, adverse effects, or risks that may apply to this medicine. This

information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from the healthcare provider. You must talk with the healthcare provider for complete information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

### **Last Reviewed Date**

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team. After 5:00 PM, during the weekend, and on holidays, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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