Nifedipine

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**
Adalat CC; Afeditab CR [DSC]; Nifedical XL [DSC]; Procardia; Procardia XL

**Brand Names: Canada**
Adalat XL; APO-Nifed PA [DSC]; DOM-NIFEdipine; MYLAN-NIFEdipine; PMS-NIFEdipine; PMS-NIFEdipine ER

**What is this drug used for?**
- It is used to treat chest pain or pressure.
- Some forms of this drug are approved to treat high blood 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?**

All products:

Nifedipine
• If you have an allergy to nifedipine or any other part of 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 are taking any of these drugs: Carbamazepine, phenobarbital, phenytoin, rifabutin, rifampin, or St. John’s wort.

• If you have had a recent heart attack.

• If you are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed.

**Extended-release tablets:**

• If you have a rare hereditary problem of galactose intolerance, Lapp lactase deficiency, or glucose-galactose malabsorption. Some products have lactose.

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?**
All products:

- 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.

- It is rare, but worse chest pain and heart attack can happen after this drug is first started or after the dose is raised. The risk may be greater in people who have very bad heart blood vessel disease. Talk with the doctor.

- Check your blood pressure as you have been told.

- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.

- Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice.

- 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.

- Very bad stomach and bowel problems like blockage and ulcers have happened with a long-acting form of this drug. Sometimes, these problems have led to the need to go to the
hospital. Talk with the 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.

**Capsules:**

- This form of this drug is not approved to treat high blood pressure. Very low blood pressure, heart attack, and death have happened when this form of this drug was used to lower high blood pressure quickly. However, your doctor may decide the benefits of taking this drug outweigh the risks. If you have been given this drug to treat high blood pressure, talk with your doctor about the benefits and risks.

**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.

- Very bad dizziness or passing out.
- Chest pain that is new or worse.
- A heartbeat that does not feel normal.
- Mood changes.
- Shortness of breath, a big weight gain, or swelling in the arms or legs.
- Muscle pain or cramping.
- Shakiness.
- Very bad belly pain.
- Very bad constipation.
- Black, tarry, or bloody stools.
- Throwing up blood or throw up that looks like coffee grounds.

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.
- Headache.
- Flushing.
- Heartburn.
- Upset stomach.
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Constipation.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.

**Extended-release tablets:**

- For some brands, you may see the tablet shell in your stool. For these brands, this is normal and not a cause for concern. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.

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 products:**

- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.
- Do not stop taking this drug all of a sudden without calling
your doctor. You may have a greater risk of side effects. If you need to stop this drug, you will want to slowly stop it as ordered by your doctor.

**Extended-release tablets:**

- Some drugs may need to be taken with food or on an empty stomach. For some drugs it does not matter. Check with your pharmacist about how to take this drug.

**What do I do if I miss a dose?**

- 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.

**How do I store and/or throw out this drug?**

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

- 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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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.
information about the risks and benefits of using this medicine.

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