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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Vernakalant

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: Canada**

Brinavess

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

- It is used to treat a certain type of abnormal heartbeat (atrial fibrillation).

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

### **For all patients taking 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 a heart rhythm problem called atrial flutter.
- If you have narrowing of the main artery from the heart (aorta) or very narrow heart valve (aortic stenosis).

- If you have any of these health problems: Certain types of abnormal heartbeats (heart block, sick sinus syndrome), heart failure, liver problems, low blood pressure, low potassium levels, or slow heartbeat.
- If you or a family member have a long QT on ECG.
- If you have had a heart attack or very bad heart failure within the last 30 days.
- If you are taking any drugs used for a heartbeat that is not normal.
- If you are taking a beta blocker like atenolol, metoprolol, or propranolol.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are pregnant.
- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug.

## **Children:**

- If the patient is a child. Do not give this drug to a child.

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.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- You will need an ECG before starting this drug and during treatment. Talk with your doctor.
- Check blood pressure and heart rate as the doctor has told you.
- You will be watched closely while you receive this drug and for some time after your dose. Talk with your doctor.
- If you are on a low-sodium or sodium-free diet, talk with your doctor. Some of these products have sodium.
- If you have a pacemaker, talk with your doctor.

- If diarrhea or throwing up happens, talk with the doctor. You will need to make sure to avoid dehydration and electrolyte problems.

## **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.
- Dizziness or passing out.
- Feeling very tired or weak.
- Slow heartbeat.
- An abnormal heartbeat that is new or worse.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Sweating a lot.
- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- A type of abnormal heartbeat (prolonged QT interval) can

happen with this drug. Call your doctor right away if you have a fast heartbeat, a heartbeat that does not feel normal, or if you pass out.

### **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:

- Feeling tired or weak.
- Headache.
- Change in taste.
- Sneezing.
- Nose irritation.
- Cough.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Diarrhea.
- Numbness or tingling in the hands or feet.
- Numbness or tingling in the mouth.
- Feeling hot.
- Pain and irritation where this drug goes into the body.

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.

- It is given as an infusion into a vein over a period of time.
- You will need to be sure that you are not dehydrated before getting this drug. Check with your doctor to see if you need to drink extra fluids before getting this drug.

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

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

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

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

### **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 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.
- 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 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 directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, 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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