

## CALCIUM CHANNEL BLOCKERS

amlodipine, diltiazem, felodipine, nifedipine, verapamil



**Other names:** Apo-Amlodipine, Calvasc®, Norvasc®, Dilzem®, Cardizem CD®, Felo ER®, Plendil ER®, Adalat®, Adefin XL®, Arrow - Nifedipine®, Nyefax Retard®, Isoptin SR®, Verapamil SR®

**Important note:** The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

### Why you are taking this medicine?

Calcium channel blockers are a group of medicines that act on your heart and blood vessels. They are called calcium channel blockers because of the way they work in the body. However calcium channel blockers do not affect your calcium levels.

Calcium channel blockers can be used in angina (chest pain), to treat high blood pressure (hypertension) and to regulate the heartbeat.

In angina (chest pain), they work by relaxing the blood vessels around the heart to allow a better oxygen supply to the heart muscle.

In high blood pressure calcium channel blockers relax other blood vessels round the body to lower blood pressure.

### When to take this medicine

Take this medicine with a glass of water with or without food. Verapamil should be taken with food to prevent any nausea.

Swallow capsules or long-acting tablets (LA, SR or ER brands) whole, do not crush or chew them.

**Important:** Different brands of modified release diltiazem have different effects and you should get the same brand each time you have a prescription. If the pack or the medicine looks different, check with your pharmacist before taking any.

You should avoid grapefruit products for all calcium channel blockers except amlodipine.

**DO NOT STOP** taking your calcium channel blocker suddenly as it may bring on an angina attack.

### If you miss a dose

Take as soon as possible except when it is close to the time for your next dose. If it is almost time for next dose, skip the missed dose and return to your regular dosing schedule. You should not take two doses at the same time.

## Side Effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, medicines may have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

Call your doctor **immediately** if you have any of these side effects:

- slow, fast or irregular heartbeat
- wheezing or trouble breathing
- skin rash
- swollen ankles or feet
- fainting

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any of these side effects are of a concern to you:

- dizziness or light-headedness
- headache
- flushing and warm feeling
- constipation (verapamil)
- nausea
- swollen gums

Dizziness or light-headedness may occur, especially when getting up quickly from a lying or from sitting. Getting up slowly may help.

The list of side effects is **not** complete. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any side effect is of a concern to you.

## Other Medication

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicine including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

Drinking alcohol may make some side effects worse (dizziness, flushing, headache) and may cause a drop in blood pressure. Keep alcohol intake to a minimum.

## Storage

Keep all medicines out of reach of children.

**Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist.**