

Calcium-channel blockers

Information for Patients

Calcium-channel blockers is the name given to a group of medicines. The name of your calcium-channel blocker is

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Why has my doctor given me a calcium-channel blocker?

Calcium-channel blockers can be used for various illnesses.

You may have been given them for one or more of the following reasons, but they also have other uses too.

- To treat angina
- To reduce high blood pressure
- To regulate the heart rhythm

Check with your doctor if you are still not sure why you need a calcium-channel blocker.

How do they work?

Calcium-channel blockers are a large group of medicines. Each medicine has a slightly different effect on your heart and blood vessels. Some widen the blood vessels, including those that supply the heart; this helps prevent angina attacks and reduces your blood pressure. Some can slow down and control the heart rate which helps to reduce the work-load of the heart.

How should I take my calcium-channel blocker?

Always follow the instructions on the label. Do not stop taking this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop. Some tablets have a special coating - these should be swallowed whole with a full glass of water.

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What should I do if I miss a dose?

Take it as soon as you remember. If it is nearly time for the next dose, do not take the one you missed. Take the next dose at the usual time. Do not double up the next dose.

What are the side effects of calcium-channel blockers?

All drugs have side effects but most people will not experience them. The following can occur in some people:-

- Headaches (these usually settle down after a few days).
- Dizziness (if you begin to feel faint let your doctor know right away).
- Flushing of the face.
- Swollen ankles.
- Constipation (if you are taking verapamil).
- Rashes (rarely).

Can I take other medicines while taking calcium-channel blockers?

Yes, but some other medicines may affect how calcium-channel blockers work. It is important that you check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any other medicines including ones that you buy over the counter. It is advisable to avoid drinking grapefruit juice with some calcium-channel blockers so please check with your doctor or pharmacist to find out whether yours is affected.

This leaflet is not intended as a substitute for any advice that your doctor, nurse or pharmacist may give you.

More detailed information can be obtained from the manufacturers information leaflet.

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