New Zealand Formulary
PATIENT INFORMATION

VERAPAMIL

ver-ap-ah-mil

What does it do?

Verapamil is used to treat some types of irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, angina, and sometimes other conditions. It slows down the electrical activity of your heart which helps to control your heartbeat. It also relaxes blood vessels, which lowers blood pressure and makes it easier for your heart to pump blood around your body.

Before you start

- Tell your doctor if you have heart failure.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.

How should you take it?

Take *verapamil* regularly as directed with a glass of water. You can take it with or without food.
Slow-release tablet: Swallow whole - do not crush or chew.

What if you forget a dose?

If it is nearly time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and take your next dose at the usual time. Otherwise, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. Do not take two doses at the same time.

Can you take other medicines?

Some medicines available without a prescription may react with *verapamil* including:

- anti-inflammatories, such as diclofenac (e.g. Voltaren®), ibuprofen (e.g. Nurofen®), or aspirin (e.g. Disprin®, in doses used for pain relief). These can also be found in some cold and flu medicines (e.g. Nurofen Cold and Flu®).

Tell your pharmacist or doctor about all medicines or treatments that you may be taking, including vitamins, herbal products (e.g. St John's wort) or recreational drugs.

What side effects might you notice?

Side Effects	Recommended action
Symptoms of a slow or irregular heartbeat including: feeling your heart skips a beat, dizziness or fainting	Tell your doctor immediately
Swollen feet or legs, short of breath	Tell your doctor
Headache Constipation	Tell your doctor if troublesome
Symptoms of low blood pressure such as dizziness or fainting	Stand up slowly. If it continues, or is severe, tell your doctor

If you notice any other effects, discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

Other information:

- Grapefruit, grapefruit juice or sour/Seville oranges may react with *verapamil*. Discuss with your pharmacist.
- Do not stop taking *verapamil* without talking to your doctor first.