

# Calcium Channel Blockers

## What are calcium channel blockers used for?

Calcium channel blockers are medicines that help lower blood pressure. Calcium channel blockers may be used to treat:

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Chest pain caused by blockage of an artery in the heart (angina)
- Some abnormal heart rhythms
- Raynaud's phenomenon (a blood vessel problem in the hands or feet)
- Coronary artery disease
- Migraine headaches

These medicines may be used for other conditions as determined by your healthcare provider.

There are several different calcium channel blockers. Which calcium channel blocker is best for you depends on your condition and health.

## How do they work?

Calcium channel blockers slow the movement of calcium from the blood into the muscle cells of the heart and blood vessel walls. Muscle cells need calcium to be able to squeeze (contract). Less calcium moving into the muscle cells allows the blood vessel walls to relax. The blood vessels open up and blood flows more easily through them. This helps lower blood pressure and the heart doesn't have to work as hard. The medicine can also affect the heart muscle directly and help the pumping and contraction of the heart.

Muscle cells in other parts of the body store their own calcium and don't depend on getting calcium from the blood. This means that muscles in other parts of your body will keep working normally when you take this medicine.

## What else do I need to know about this medicine?

- Follow the directions that come with your medicine, including information about food or alcohol. Make sure you know how and when to take your medicine. Do not take more or less than you are supposed to take. Don't suddenly stop taking this medicine without your healthcare provider's approval. Some conditions can get worse if you suddenly stop taking this medicine.
- Many medicines have side effects. A side effect is a symptom or problem that is caused by the medicine. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist what side effects the medicine may cause and what you should do if you have side effects.
- Try to get all of your prescriptions filled at the same place. Your pharmacist can help make sure that all of your medicines are safe to take together.

- Keep a list of your medicines with you. List all of the prescription medicines, nonprescription medicines, supplements, natural remedies, and vitamins that you take. Tell all healthcare providers who treat you about all of the products you are taking.

If you have any questions, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for more information. Be sure to keep all appointments for provider visits or tests.

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