

# PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET



## MEDICINE TO TREAT: HYPERTENSION

### Calcium Channel Blockers (Calcium Antagonists)

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#### 1 What are Calcium Channel Blockers used for?

These medicines relax smooth muscle cells in blood vessels causing the blood vessels to widen and hence lower blood pressure.

#### 2 What are the possible side effects of Calcium Channel Blockers?

Constipation is the commonest side effect of this group of drugs. Some of these drugs can cause the heart rate to be slower. Leg swelling, flushing and headache are the less common side effects.

#### 3 What precautions should I take?

As there is no adequate and controlled studies of their use in pregnancy, these medicines should be used only when clearly indicated. They should not be used during breastfeeding. As some of these drugs can cause the heart rate to be slower, they should be used with great caution with other drugs that slow the heart rate e.g. digoxin, beta blockers and amiodarone. Combination therapy should be regularly monitored by your doctor.

There may be significant interactions with both Western and traditional medicines. Always inform any doctor you consult if you are on any of these medicines.

#### 4 What are the commonly used Calcium Channel Blockers?

- Nifedipine
- Verapamil
- Diltiazem

Long acting preparations of the above are available.

- Amlodipine