

Information Sheet for Verapamil in Cluster Headache

Verapamil is used to prevent the cluster attacks from occurring. Although it is not licenced for this indication, and the doses used are above licenced doses in other areas, it is used widely by headache specialists. As Verapamil can cause slowing of the heart, the dose has to be increased gradually as given below, and an ECG needs to be performed before each increase. Increase the dose only if advised by your doctor. If you start to get any side effects please let your doctor know as soon as possible. If you continue to take Verapamil your ECG should be checked every six months.

	Morning	Midday	Evening
For 2 weeks take:	80mg	80mg	80mg
<i>Arrange to have an ECG performed - if the ECG is normal then:</i>			
For 2 weeks take:	80mg	80mg	160mg
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<i>Arrange to have an ECG performed - if the ECG is normal then:</i>			
For 2 weeks take:	320mg	320mg	320mg
<i>Arrange to have an ECG performed and if normal repeat every 6 months</i>			

Side effects and drug interaction

Side effects are listed in the product leaflet. The main problem is slowing of the heart rate. There are a number of drugs that interact with Verapamil and which should be avoided, the most important being Beta Blockers and Digoxin.

Pregnancy and breast-feeding:

You should not take Verapamil if you are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding.

This leaflet should be read in conjunction with the product characteristic leaflet that can be found inside all boxes of medication. The use of any medicine is based on considerations of how benefits outweigh potential side effects. **Your prescribing doctor will discuss the risks and benefits of the medication as it relates to you and answer any further questions you may have.**