Verapamil
(Ver-a-pa-mill)

**Description:** Calcium Channel Blocker

**Other Names for this Medication:** Calan®, Isoptin®, Verelan®

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** None. **Human:** 40 mg, 80 mg, & 120 mg tablets; 100 mg, 120 mg, 180 mg, 200 mg, 240 mg, 300 mg, & 360 mg sustained/extended-release tablets & capsules.

This information sheet does not contain all available information for this medication. It is to help answer commonly asked questions and help you give the medication safely and effectively to your animal. If you have other questions or need more information about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.

### Key Information
- **Verapamil is used in dogs and cats to treat heart rhythm problems.**
- This drug may be given with or without food. If your animal vomits or acts sick after receiving the drug on an empty stomach, try giving the next dose with food or a small treat. If vomiting continues, contact your veterinarian.
- **Not commonly used in veterinary medicine, so adverse effects are not well known in dogs and cats, but swelling of the limbs, too fast or too slow heartbeats, gastrointestinal (GI) effects (eg, vomiting, constipation), and drowsiness/tiredness/lack of energy are possible.**
- It is important that your animal gets all prescribed doses; do not skip any treatments.
- **Animal will need to be seen regularly by veterinarian to monitor how well the medicine is working.**

### How is this medication useful?
Verapamil works on the heart by changing how calcium is used to treat heart rhythm problems. The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for use in humans but it is not officially approved for use in animals. The FDA allows veterinarians to prescribe products containing this drug in different species or for other conditions in certain situations. You and your veterinarian can discuss why this drug is the most appropriate choice.

### What should I tell my veterinarian to see if this medication can be safely given?
Many things might affect how well this drug will work in your animal. Be sure to discuss the following with your veterinarian so together you can make the best treatment decisions.

- Other drugs can cause problems when taken with verapamil. Be sure to tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including vitamins, supplements, or herbal therapies) you are giving your animal, as well as the amount and schedule of each.
Tell your veterinarian about any conditions or diseases your animal may have now or has had in the past.

How long until I will know if this medication is working, and how long will the effects of this medication last?
This medication should start having effects within 1 to 2 hours; however, you will not see the effects of this medication outwardly. Your veterinarian will need to run further tests to determine if the medication is working appropriately. The effects of this medication are short-lived, meaning they will stop working within 24 hours, although the benefits may be prolonged if your animal has decreased kidney and/or liver function.

When should this medication not be used or be used very carefully?
No drug is 100% safe in all patients, but your veterinarian will discuss with you any specific concerns about using this drug in your animal.

What are the side effects of this medication?

Side effects that usually are not serious include:
- Tiredness and weakness may indicate the drug is causing a heartbeat that is too slow or low blood pressure.
- Behavior changes.
- Lack of appetite, constipation, or vomiting.
You don’t have to be overly concerned if you see any of these signs unless they are severe, worsen, or continue to be a problem. Contact your veterinarian if this happens.

Side effects that may be serious or indicate a serious problem:
- Trouble breathing, wheezing, or inability to catch it's breath may indicate excessive fluid in the lungs.
- Collapse (passing out), severe weakness, or exercise intolerance (unable to exercise).
If you see any of these signs, contact your veterinarian immediately.

If my animal gets too much of this medication (an overdose), what should I do?
Overdoses of verapamil can be serious and can cause low blood pressure, heart rhythm abnormalities, increases in blood sugar, and a slow heartbeat. If you witness or suspect an overdose, contact your veterinarian or an animal poison control center for further advice. Animal poison control centers that are open 24 hours a day include: Pet Poison HELPLINE (855-764-7661) and ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (888-426-4435); a consultation fee is charged for these services.

How should this medication be given?
For this medication to work, give it exactly as your veterinarian has prescribed. It’s a good idea to always check the prescription label to be sure you are giving the drug correctly.
- Verapamil may be given either with food or on an empty stomach. If your animal vomits or acts sick after receiving the drug on an empty stomach, try giving the next dose with food or a small treat. If vomiting continues, contact your veterinarian.
- Compounded liquid forms of this medication must be measured carefully. Your veterinarian or pharmacist can help by providing special measuring spoons or syringes.
- If you have difficulty getting your animal to take the medicine, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist for tips to help with dosing and reducing the stress of medication time.

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This medication can be given for various lengths of time. Be sure you understand how long your veterinarian wants you to continue giving this medication. Prescription refills may be necessary before the therapy will be complete. Before stopping this medication, talk to your veterinarian, as there may be important reasons to continue its use.

**What should I do if I miss giving a dose of this medication?**
If you miss a dose, give it when you remember, but wait the time recommended by your veterinarian before giving another dose. Do not double-up doses or give an extra dose.

**How should I store this medication?**
- Store this medication in the original prescription bottle or an approved dosage reminder container (ie, pill minder) at room temperature.
- If your veterinarian or pharmacist has made (compounded) a special formulation for your animal, follow the storage recommendations and expiration date for the product.
- Keep away from children and other animals.

**Can handling this medication be hazardous to me, my family, or other animals?**
There are no specific precautions required when handling this medication, but it is always a good idea to wash your hands after handling any medication.

**How should I dispose of this medication if I don’t use it all?**
- Do not flush this medication down the toilet or wash it down the sink. If a community drug “take-back” program is available, use this option. If there is no take-back program, mix the drug with coffee grounds or cat litter (to make it undesirable to children and animals and unrecognizable to people who might go through your trash), place the mixture in a sealable plastic bag to keep it from leaking out, and throw the bag out with the regular trash.
- Do not save leftover medication for future use or give it to others to use.

**What other information is important for this medication?**
- Use of this drug may not be allowed in certain animal competitions. Check rules and regulations before entering your animal in a competition while this medication is being administered.
- Your veterinarian will need to do periodic examinations and blood tests on your animal while it is taking this medicine. Do not miss these important follow-up visits.

**If you have any other questions about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.**