

Verapamil

Verapamil is a blood pressure medicine which blocks calcium channels in the brain. In this way, it works similarly to many effective treatments for mania and mood cycling, and has been studied in those conditions although it is not FDA-approved for mood disorders.

Side Effects and Warnings

Dizziness, constipation, dry mouth, nausea, stomach upset. Verapamil can lower blood pressure, which may lead to unexpected fainting. Verapamil should not be taken by people with heart disease without the approval of their cardiologist or primary care physician.

Dosing

Verapamil should be taken 2-3 times per day. It is also available as a once-daily XR form.

Drug Interactions

Grapefruit juice will raise levels of verapamil. Verapamil can make the effects of alcohol last longer than expected. Verapamil can lower or raise levels of lithium, so closer monitoring of that medicine is necessary when taking them together. Verapamil has other drug interactions; please check with your pharmacist to be sure.

–Chris Aiken, MD, Updated 7/10/2010