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AMLODIPINE - ORAL

OTHER NAMES: Norvasc

USES: Calcium is involved in muscle contraction. By blocking calcium, this medication relaxes the heart muscle and dilates the blood vessels of the heart to prevent spasm. Amlodipine is used to treat angina (chest pain) or to manage hypertension (high blood pressure).

HOW TO TAKE THIS MEDICATION: This medication should be swallowed whole without regard to meals unless your doctor directs you otherwise.

This drug must be taken as directed if used to prevent chest pain. It is not effective if taken only when chest pain occurs.

Do not stop taking this medication suddenly without your doctor's permission. Chest pain can occur if the medication is stopped too fast. Your dose may need to be gradually decreased.

SIDE EFFECTS: This drug may cause dizziness and lightheadedness especially during the first few days. Avoid activities requiring alertness. When you sit or lie down for a while, get up slowly to allow your body to adjust and minimize dizziness.

You may also experience fatigue or weakness, nausea, heart-burn, muscle cramps, headache or flushing. These effects should disappear as your body adjusts to the medication. Inform your doctor if they become bothersome.

Notify your doctor if develop breathing difficulties, swelling of the hands or feet or an irregular heartbeat.

PRECAUTIONS: Before taking this drug, tell your doctor if you have heart, liver disease or if you have any allergies.

Limit intake of alcohol while taking this drug.

This medication should be used only when clearly needed during pregnancy. Discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor. It is not known if this drug is excreted into breast milk. Other calcium channel blockers are known to be excreted and breast-feeding is not recommended while taking those drugs. Consult your doctor before breast-feeding.

DRUG INTERACTIONS: Tell your doctor what medications you take, especially beta blockers, cimetidine, cyclosporine, and digoxin.

Avoid any drugs that increase your heart-rate (the decongestants phenylephrine, pseudoephedrine and

phenylpropanolamine are examples). These drugs are commonly found in over-the-counter cough and cold products.

It is best to take this drug at least 2 hours before ingesting any grapefruit products. Alternatively, choose a different fruit product.

MISSED DOSE: If you miss a dose, take as soon as remembered; do not take if it is almost time for the next dose, instead, skip the missed dose and resume your usual dosing schedule. Do not "double-up" the dose to catch up.

STORAGE: Store at room temperature away from sunlight and moisture.

Your condition can cause complications in a medical emergency. For information on enrollment call Medic Alert(TM) at 1-800-854-1166. In Canada call 1-800-668-1507.