

Tramadol

(tram-ah-doll)

Category: Pain Reliever (Opiate-like)

Other Names for this Medication: Ultram®, Ultracet®

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: None. **Human:** 50 mg tablets; 100 mg, 200 mg, & 300 mg extended-release tablets; also available in a fixed dose combination of 37.5 mg (tramadol)/325 mg (acetaminophen) tablets (acetaminophen containing formulations not for use in cats). Tramadol may also be made (compounded) into an oral suspension or a transdermal gel.

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

- ▶ May take up to two weeks to have an effect for chronic pain.
- ▶ May be given with or without food. If your pet 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.
- ▶ May cause changes in alertness or behavior. Use with caution in working or service dogs.
- ▶ The combination product with acetaminophen (Ultracet®) must NOT be used in cats.
- ▶ Tramadol is a controlled substance in the USA. It is against the law to use, give away, or sell this medication to others than for whom it was prescribed.

How is this medication useful to your pet?

In dogs, cats, and horses, tramadol can be useful to help treat chronic (continuing) pain. This drug is usually used in combination with other drugs, including non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), amantadine, and gabapentin. Tramadol sometimes is used to reduce coughing in dogs.

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 does allow veterinarians to prescribe and use human products containing this drug in animals 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 to my pet?

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 interact with tramadol, including some other drugs that are used for pain or behavior issues, so be sure to tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including vitamins, supplements, or herbal therapies) you give your animal, including the amount and time you give each.
- ▶ Tell your veterinarian about any conditions or diseases your animal may have now or has had in the past.
- ▶ If your animal has been treated for the same disease or condition in the past, tell your veterinarian about the treatment and how well it worked or didn't work.
- ▶ If your animal is pregnant or nursing, talk to your veterinarian about the risks of using this drug.
- ▶ Tell your veterinarian and pharmacist about any medication side effects (including allergic reactions, lack of appetite, diarrhea, itching, hair loss) your animal has developed in the past.

When should this drug 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.

This drug **SHOULD NOT** be used in patients:

- ▶ That are allergic to it.
- ▶ **THE COMBINATION PRODUCT CONTAINING ACETAMINOPHEN MUST NOT BE USED IN CATS.**

This drug should be used **WITH CAUTION** in patients:

- ▶ In animals with kidney or liver problems.
- ▶ In animals that have epilepsy or a history of seizures (convulsions).
- ▶ In working or service dogs, as they may become overly sedated (sleepy) and unable to perform their duties.
- ▶ In animals that are old, sick, or debilitated (weak, frail).

If your animal has any of these conditions or signs, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks versus benefits.

What are the side effects of the drug?

Common, but not serious side effects include:

- ▶ Dogs: Sleepiness, dizziness, anxiety, tremors, reduced appetite, vomiting, constipation, diarrhea.
- ▶ Cats: Dilated (large) pupils, anxiety, feeling of uneasiness.
- ▶ Itching is commonly reported in humans taking tramadol so it may occur in animals.

You don't have to be overly concerned if you see any of these unless they are severe, worsen, or continue to be a problem. Contact your veterinarian if this happens.

The following serious side effects may mean the dose is too high or a serious drug interaction has occurred.

- ▶ Dogs: Seizures (convulsions), agitation (anxious, nervous, upset, unable to relax), extreme sleepiness, trouble walking, stumbling.
- ▶ Cats: Increased salivation (drooling), faster heartbeat, agitation (anxious, nervous, upset, unable to relax), sleepiness, trouble walking, stumbling.

If you see any of these, contact your veterinarian immediately.

If my pet gets too much of this drug (an overdose), what should I do?

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 drug 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.

- ▶ May be given with or without food. If your pet 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.
- ▶ 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 dosing and reducing the stress of medication time.
- ▶ 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 my animal a dose of this medication?

If you miss a dose, wait and give the next dose when it is usually time to do so, or give it when you remember and then wait the regular time between doses 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 tramadol tablets in the original prescription bottle or an approved dosage reminder (ie, pill minder) container at room temperature; protect tablets from moisture. Store liquid forms of this medication in the refrigerator.

- ▶ 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 pets?

There are no specific precautions required when handling this medication unless you are allergic to it. 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?

- ▶ Products containing tramadol are controlled substance drugs in the USA. It is against the law to use, give away, or sell this medication to others than for whom it was prescribed.
- ▶ 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.

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