



# Trazodone

- Keep this leaflet safe, as you may need to refer to it again.
- Please ask your vet if you have any further questions.
- This medicine has been prescribed for *your* pet ONLY. Do not take it yourself or give it to another person or any other animal; it may harm them even if their symptoms appear to be the same.

The medicine you have been given for your dog or cat is called trazodone. It may have a trade name such as Desyrel®, Molipaxin® or Oleptro®, but often will just be called trazodone.

## What is trazodone?

Trazodone belongs to a group of medicines that are called *atypical antidepressants*, because they have mixed effects on a range nerve cell receptors connected to the chemical serotonin. Serotonin is involved in the regulation of mood, anxiety, sleep, appetite and impulsivity.

## Why has my pet been prescribed trazodone?

In cats and dogs, trazodone is used for helping to manage a range of behaviour problems associated with chronic anxiety, especially those that are not fully unresponsive to other medications, which are more commonly used to help manage these conditions. It may be used in place of these drugs or in addition to these drugs, but in the latter case, your pet's health and behaviour will need to be carefully monitored. Trazodone may also be used for the management of some short-term anxiety-related problems such as travel anxiety.

## How should I store trazodone?

This medicine does not require any special storage conditions. Store in a cool, dry place. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

## How do I give trazodone tablets to my pet?

This medicine may be given either with or without food. The tablets may be disguised in a small amount of strongly flavoured food that your pet likes. Alternatively, they can be placed carefully on the back of your pet's tongue and their mouth closed until the entire tablet has been swallowed. Treatment should be given as directed by your vet but is often given as an oral treatment once a day.

## How long will my pet need to take trazodone?

The duration of administration depends on the condition being treated, the response to medication and the development of any adverse side effects. In certain situations, the dose may be increased after a few

weeks until an appropriate unique dose is found for your pet. Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients and can be for the rest of their life, although increased tolerance to this medication over time is common.

## What should I do if I run out of tablets?

Try not to run out. Make sure you order more tablets from your vet if your supply is getting low. If you do run out, contact your own vet for further advice and restart the course as soon as possible.

## What should I do if I miss a dose?

If a dose is missed give the medication as soon as possible and continue the regular schedule. **DO NOT** give a double dose to make up for the missed dose and do not exceed the total stated dose in any one 24-hour period.

## What should I do if my pet is accidentally given too many doses?

**Contact your vet immediately** if an overdose is given. The most common side effects with an overdose are lethargy, drooling, agitation and in some cases, seizures.

## Can my pet take trazodone if I am already giving them other drugs?

Tell your vet if you are giving your pet any other medications, even if you think they already know. This includes herbal and off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop, pharmacy or the internet. This drug interacts with a wide range of medications and your vet will advise you on the safety of taking multiple medications accordingly. In particular, trazodone should not be used alongside some other antidepressant medications, especially in the class of 'monoamine oxidase inhibitors' (e.g. selegine). In some cases, these medications should not be given within a few weeks of one another. Although trazodone may be given alongside certain other antidepressant medications, caution should be taken as an additive effect often occurs. Particular caution

should be taken if trazodone is given with antacid medications such as cimetidine, certain anti-seizure medications such as phenobarbital as well as some antihistamines and diuretics. If taken with blood thinners such as warfarin and aspirin, prolonged bleeding may occur. Certain medications used to treat fungal diseases such as ketoconazole and itraconazole can prolong the effects of trazodone. If you have any concerns about using trazodone with any other medications, please ask your vet for further advice.

## What are the possible side effects of trazodone for my pet?

Side effects include sedation, drowsiness, vomiting, excitability and a dry mouth. Weakness, confusion, restlessness and irritability may also be caused. In humans, persistent painful erections have been reported while taking trazodone, and so this might be a risk in male animals especially when the drug is first introduced. If your pet experiences an allergic reaction to the medication, side effects may include facial swelling, hives, vomiting and seizures.

## What should I do if my pet is unwell while taking trazodone?

If your pet is unwell while receiving this medication, you should not give any further doses and should contact your vet immediately for advice.

## What should I do if a person accidentally takes this drug?

If a person takes your pet's tablets, the person should be taken to the local hospital immediately. Take this leaflet and any remaining tablets plus their container (even if it is empty) with you.

## Whom do I contact if I want to know more?

If you have any questions about this drug, or any concerns with your pet's health then contact your own vet. They will know your pet's medical history and will know about trazodone.

## The Prescribing Cascade

This medicine is authorized for use in human patients and is used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. The medicine is not authorized by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), for use in dogs/cats/pets. Your vet can explain the 'prescribing cascade' in further detail to you and also explain why they are prescribing this drug for your pet. You will be asked to sign a consent form stating that you understand the reasons that the drug is being prescribed and its possible complications, before the treatment is issued.

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