



Medicine series

Practice details

Tramadol

- Keep this leaflet safe, as you may need to refer to it again.
- Please ask your vet or veterinary nurse 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 tramadol. It may have a trade name such as Tramadol ER®, Ultracet®, Ultram® or Zamadol®, but often will just be called tramadol.

What is tramadol?

Tramadol belongs to a group of medicines that are called opioid analgesics. These drugs are used to alleviate moderate to severe pain and can be used to control some forms of compulsive-type behaviours. Other types of analgesics (pain-relieving drugs) are often given in combination with opioids to produce better pain relief, for example, tramadol may be prescribed in combination with a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug. Tramadol is a Controlled Drug and is subject to certain legal requirements; your vet will explain this to you.

Why has my pet been prescribed tramadol?

Tramadol is used in veterinary patients to relieve pain, often in chronic conditions such as osteoarthritis and cancer, or in association with problem behaviour like persistent licking or nibbling of a body part. It may also be used to help provide pain relief after major surgery.

How should I store tramadol?

This medicine does not require special storage conditions. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

How do I give tramadol tablets/capsules to my pet?

Try to disguise tramadol in a strongly flavoured food that your pet likes. Alternatively, it can be placed carefully on the back of your pet's tongue and their mouth held closed until the entire dose has been swallowed.

How long will my pet need to take tramadol?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients.

What should I do if I run out of tablets or capsules?

Try not to run out. Make sure you order more 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. However, it is best to skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your pet's next scheduled dose. **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 your pet receives an overdose of tramadol.

Can my pet take tramadol 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 or off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop, pharmacy or health store. No information is available on whether tramadol interacts with other drugs in dogs and cats. However, in people, this drug may interact with certain behaviour-modifying drugs (e.g. amitriptyline, selegiline) and opioids (fentanyl and buprenorphine) that are used in veterinary medicine. Tramadol needs to be used with great caution, if it is to be used at all, in these circumstances.

What are the possible side effects of tramadol for my pet?

Tramadol tends to cause fewer side effects in people than do other opioid analgesics. Opioids in general can cause slow breathing (respiratory depression) and constipation, but these side effects are very uncommon in dogs and cats. The most common side effect of tramadol in dogs is sedation or drowsiness. Dysphoria can also sometimes occur, which is when dogs appear restless and anxious. If these side effects occur, your vet may advise you to reduce the dose of tramadol that you are giving to your dog. In cats, sedation can occur but dysphoria is also possible; cats appear to be depressed, restless or anxious. Your vet may also advise you to reduce the dose of tramadol if these side effects are seen in cats. Tramadol can increase the risk of fits in patients that already have epilepsy. If your pet shows *any* unusual symptoms whilst taking this medication, please contact your vet.

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

If your pet is unwell while receiving tramadol, 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 accidentally takes your pet's medicine, the person should be taken to the local hospital **immediately**. Take this leaflet and any remaining tablets/capsules 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 concerns about your pet's health, contact your own vet. They will know your pet's medical history and will know about tramadol.