Plumb's Drug Handouts

Trazodone

(***traz***-*oh-dohn*)

Key Information

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- Trazodone is used to treat a variety of anxiety-related conditions.
- May be given with or without food
- For short-term anxiety relief, trazodone works best when given 1 to 2 hours before stressful events.
- For chronic behavior conditions, the full calming effect may take up to several weeks of routine use.
- Most common side effects are drowsiness, decreased activity, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Note: The purpose of this information sheet is to answer commonly asked questions. It does not contain all available information for this medication and is not a substitute for medical advice provided by your veterinary healthcare team.

Description	• Anti-anxiety agent • Serotonin antagonist/reuptake inhibitor • Available as oral tablets
Other common names	*Desyrel*
Uses	This medication is not FDA approved specifically for animals, but it is approved for use in humans. At the discretion of your veterinarian, this medication may be used in other species (extra-label), such as for: • Treatment of stress or anxiety in dogs, cats, and other species • Prevention of anxiety during stressful events in dogs and cats, such as veterinary visits, car rides, thunderstorms, or fireworks • Calming during activity restriction in dogs, cats, and other species
Before this medication is given	No medication is 100% safe in all patients. Discuss with your veterinarian: • Any other medications or supplements your animal is taking • Any conditions or diseases your animal has now or has had in the past • Any side effects your animal has had to medications in the past • The risks of using this medication if your animal is pregnant or nursing
Warnings for animals	Do **not** use in animals: • That are allergic to it • Wearing an amitraz flea collar or taking a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI), such as selegiline. Tell your veterinarian about all medications, collars, and dips used **within 2 weeks** of starting this medication. Use with **caution** in animals: • With kidney, liver, or heart problems • With closed-angle glaucoma • That are pregnant or nursing • That are working or service animals. They may become too tired to perform their duties. Certain medications are not allowed in some animal competitions. Check rules and regulations when your animal is taking a medication.
Warnings for humans	• Wash your hands after handling any medication.
How do I give this medication?	• Give with or without food.

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	• When used for situational anxiety, this medication works best when given 1 to 2 hours before stressful events. Follow your veterinarian's instructions. • When used for treatment of chronic behavior conditions, this medication should be used in combination with a behavior modification plan. Discuss this with your veterinarian. *Give exactly as your veterinarian has prescribed. Always follow the instructions on the prescription label.*
Side effects	**Common** – contact your veterinarian if any of these signs are severe, continue to occur, or worsen over time: • Drowsiness or lack of energy • Loss of coordination • Vomiting or diarrhea **Severe** – stop the medication and contact your veterinarian immediately if you notice any of these signs: • Increased anxiety • Aggression Very rarely, this medication can cause a condition called **serotonin syndrome**. This happens when too much serotonin builds up in the body. Potential signs include rigid muscles, muscle tremors, restlessness, panting or pacing, agitation, enlarged pupils, loss of coordination, disorientation, or seizures. Contact your veterinarian immediately if you notice any of these signs. Giving multiple medications that affect serotonin at the same time increases the risk for serotonin syndrome.
How will I know it's working?	• When used for short-term relief of stressful situations, your animal should appear calmer in 1 to 2 hours. • When used to manage chronic behavior conditions, this medication needs to be given consistently for several weeks before it will reach full effect. You should see a gradual improvement in your animal's behavior as the medication becomes fully effective. *Contact your veterinary clinic if your animal's signs worsen or do not improve.*
How long will the medication effects last?	• This medication will stop working within 24 hours of the last dose. • It may last longer if your animal has reduced liver function.
How long do I give it for?	This medication can be given for different lengths of time. Give it for as long as your veterinarian tells you. You may need to refill the prescription. Do not suddenly stop giving this medication when using for treatment of chronic behavior conditions. • When discontinuing, the dose may need to be decreased gradually over time to prevent side effects from withdrawal. • Your veterinarian will provide tapering instructions.
Overdose	If you witness or suspect an overdose, call your veterinarian or an animal-specific poison control center (consultation fee applies): • **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center**: (888) 426-4435 • **Pet Poison Helpline**: (855) 764-7661 *Have the product or label with you if possible.*
Missed dose	In most cases, if you miss a dose: • Give it when you remember, then return to the regular dosing schedule. If it is close to the time for the next dose: • Skip the missed dose. • Give the next dose at the next scheduled time. • Continue the regular dosing schedule.

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	If you are unsure, call your veterinary clinic. Do not double-up or give extra doses.
Storage	• Store in the original container at room temperature. • Protect from light. • Keep out of reach of children and animals.
Disposal	Do **not** flush this medication down the toilet or wash down the sink. Options for disposing of unused or expired medications include: • Drug take back sites: This is preferred whenever possible. To find a site near you, contact your local law enforcement or waste management authorities. • Home disposal: Mix the medication in with coffee grounds or kitty litter, seal in a plastic bag, and throw away in the trash. *Do **not** save leftover medication or give it to others to use.*
Questions?	Talk to your veterinarian.

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