Plumb's Drug Handouts

Zonisamide

(*zoh-**niss**-a-mide*)

Key Information

- Zonisamide is used to prevent seizures.
- May be given with or without food
- The most common side effects include drowsiness, uncoordinated movement, vomiting, diarrhea, or decreased appetite.
- Contact your veterinarian if you notice a complete loss of appetite, excessive thirst, abdominal swelling, or yellowing of the skin, eyes, or gums (*jaundice*). Although rare, these can be signs of liver problems.
- Wear gloves when handling if you are pregnant, nursing, or trying to conceive.
- Do not stop this medication suddenly.

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	• Anticonvulsant • Available as capsules and an oral liquid
Other common names	*Zonegran*
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 epilepsy in dogs and cats
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 • That are allergic to any sulfonamide drugs Use with **caution** in animals: • With kidney disease • With a dry eye syndrome called keratoconjunctivitis sicca (KCS) • That are pregnant or nursing 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. • Wear gloves when handling if you are pregnant, nursing, or trying to conceive.
How do I give this medication?	• Give with or without food. Giving with food may help prevent stomach upset. • Shake liquids well before each dose. • If using a liquid, measure with an oral syringe, medicine cup, or dosing spoon. Do not use household measuring devices. *Give exactly as your veterinarian has prescribed. Always follow the instructions on the prescription label.*

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Side effects	**Common** – contact your veterinarian if any of these signs are severe, continue to occur, or worsen over time: • Drowsiness • Uncoordinated movement • Vomiting, diarrhea, and decreased appetite **Severe** – stop the medication and contact your veterinarian immediately if you notice any of these signs: • Changes in behavior • Complete loss of appetite, excessive thirst, abdominal swelling, or yellowing of the skin, eyes, or gums (*jaundice*). Although rare, these can be signs of liver problems.
How will I know it's working?	• This medication will start working within a few hours, but you will not be able to see the effects of this medication. • Your veterinarian will need to run follow up tests to see how well this medication is working and to make sure your animal is tolerating it. • Contact your veterinary clinic if your animal's seizures worsen or do not improve.
How long will the medication effects last?	• The effect of this medication may last for a few days after the last dose. • It may last longer if your animal has reduced kidney function.
How long do I give it for?	This medication can be given for different lengths of time but is often a lifelong medication. Give it for as long as your veterinarian tells you. Make sure to refill the prescription to avoid interruptions in treatment. Do not suddenly stop giving this medication. • When discontinuing, the dose needs to be decreased gradually over time to prevent side effects and withdrawal seizures. • 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. *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	Discard liquids 30 days after opening the bottle. 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.

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	• 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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