

Amlodipine

(am-loe-di-peen)

Description:

Calcium Channel Blocker

Other Names for this Medication: Norvasc®

Common Dosage Forms:

Veterinary: None. **Human:** 2.5 mg, 5 mg, & 10 mg tablets. Compounded oral suspensions are also available.

This information sheet does not contain all available information for this medication and has not been reviewed by FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine. This sheet can help answer commonly asked questions but is not a substitute for medical advice. If you have other questions or need more information about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.

Key Information

- Used to treat high blood pressure in cats and, sometimes, in dogs.
- Very important to not skip doses, as high blood pressure can quickly return.
- May be given with or without food. If your animal 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.
- Side effects are not common in cats but include reduced appetite and low blood pressure, especially early in treatment. In dogs, overgrowth of the gums can occur.
- Your animal will need to be seen regularly by your veterinarian to check that the medication is working properly. Do not miss these important follow-up visits.

How is this medication useful?

Amlodipine works on the heart and blood vessels to help lower blood pressure. High blood pressure in animals can cause damage to the kidneys, eyes, and brain. 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 in the USA. The FDA allows veterinarians to prescribe products containing this drug in different species or for other conditions 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?

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 may cause problems when taken with amlodipine. Be sure to tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including vitamins, herbal therapies, or supplements) you are giving your animal, as well as 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 did 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.

How long until I will know if this medication is working, and how long will the effects of this medication last?

This medication should start having effects within 1 to 2 hours; however, you will not see the effects of this medication outwardly. Your veterinarian will need to run further tests to determine if the medication is working appropriately.

The effects of this medication are short-lived, meaning they will stop working within 24 hours, although the benefits may be prolonged if your animal has decreased kidney and/or liver function.

When should this medication 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 have had an allergic reaction to it.

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

- With liver problems as the drug is metabolized in the liver.
- With heart failure.
- At risk for low blood pressure.

If your animal matches any of these conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the possible risks versus benefits.

What are the side effects of this medication? *Side effects that are not serious include:*

- It is not common, but at the beginning of treatment some cats have a reduced appetite or act tired.
- Rarely in dogs, an overgrowth of gum tissue.

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

Side effects that may be serious or indicate a serious problem:

- Very slow or very fast heart rates.
- Collapsing/fainting, severe weakness.
- Significant changes in urination habits (either much more urine or much less than usual).
- Abnormal bleeding.

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

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

Overdoses of amlodipine can be serious causing very low blood pressure and slow heart rate. If you witness or suspect an overdose, immediately contact your veterinarian or an animal poison control center for further advice. Animal poison control centers that are open 24 hours a day include: **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center** (888-426-4435) and **Pet Poison HELPLINE** (855-764-7661); a consultation fee is charged for these services.

How should this medication be given?

For this medication to work, give it exactly as your veterinarian prescribed. It's a good idea to always check the prescription label to be sure you are giving the drug correctly.

- Amlodipine may be given either with food or on an empty stomach. If your animal 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.
- Compounded 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.
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This medication can be given for various lengths of time. Be sure you understand how long the veterinarian wants you to continue giving this medication. Prescription refills may be necessary before the therapy will be complete.

Do not suddenly stop giving this medication to your animal. Talk to your veterinarian before stopping this medicine to your animal as there may be important reasons to continue its use.

What should I do if I miss giving a dose of this medication?

If you miss a dose, give it when you remember and then wait the amount of time between doses recommended by your veterinarian before giving another dose. Do not double-up or give extra doses.

How should I store this medication?

- Store this medication in the original childproof, light resistant prescription bottle, or an approved dosage reminder container (ie, pill minder) at room temperature.
- Keep away from children and other animals.
- If your veterinarian or pharmacist has made (compounded) a special formulation for your animal, follow the noted storage recommendations and expiration date for the product.

Can handling this medication be hazardous to me, my family, or other animals?

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?

- Your animal will likely need to have periodic blood pressure and blood tests performed while on this medication. Do not miss these important follow-up appointments.
- Use of this drug may not be allowed in certain animal competitions. Please check rules and regulations before entering your animal in a competition while this medication is being administered.

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