Diltiazem (Cardizem, Dilacor)

Common Drug Name
Diltiazem

Common Brand Names
Cardizem, Dilacor

Generic products are available.

Storage
Refrigerate oral suspension. Store other forms at room temperature in a tight, light resistant, childproof container.

Uses
Diltiazem is in a class of drugs called calcium channel blockers. It helps the heart to work more efficiently, and is used in the treatment of various heart conditions, including hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, hypertension (high blood pressure), and certain rhythm abnormalities.

Dose and Administration
Always follow the dosage instructions provided by your veterinarian. If you have difficulty giving the medication, contact your veterinarian.

Give the oral form by mouth, with or without food.

If using the transdermal gel, apply to the skin as directed by your veterinarian.

If you miss a dose, give it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for the next dose, skip the one you missed and go back to the regular schedule. Do not give 2 doses at once.

This medication should only be given to the pet for whom it was prescribed.

Possible Side Effects
A slow heart rate is the most common side effect in dogs. Vomiting is the most common side effect in cats. Other potential side effects in these species include low blood pressure, irregular heart rates, which results in weakness or fainting; rashes, elevated liver enzyme tests, and effects on the central nervous system (CNS). Consult your veterinarian if you notice any of the above side effects.

If your pet experiences an allergic reaction to the medication, signs may include facial swelling, hives, scratching, sudden onset of diarrhea, vomiting, shock, seizures, pale gums, cold limbs, or coma. If you observe any of these signs, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Precautions
Not for use in animals hypersensitive (allergic) to diltiazem.

High doses in rodents have caused fetal death and birth defects. Do not use in pregnant or lactating animals (female animals nursing their young) unless the benefits outweigh the risks.

Do not use in animals with severe hypotension (low blood pressure), a heart condition known as “AV block,” or lung congestion.

Use with caution in geriatric animals and those with heart failure or liver or kidney disease.

Consult with your veterinarian regarding the physical examinations and laboratory testing necessary prior to and during treatment with diltiazem.

Drug, Food, and Test Interactions
Consult your veterinarian before using diltiazem with vitamins and supplements, beta blockers, cimetidine, or ranitidine, since interactions may occur.

Diltiazem may affect the blood levels of the following drugs: cyclosporine, quinidine, propranolol, and digoxin. Blood monitoring of digoxin levels is recommended.

Signs of Toxicity/Overdose
May see heart block, low blood pressure, low heart rate, and heart failure, with signs including weakness, fainting, coughing, inability to exercise, loss of appetite, difficult or rapid breathing, distended abdomen, and pale gums.

If you know or suspect your pet has had an overdose, or if you observe any of these signs in your pet, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Keep this and all other medications out of the reach of children and pets.