

# Amiodarone

- 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 is called amiodarone. It may have a trade name such as Cordarone®, but often will just be called amiodarone.

## What is amiodarone?

Amiodarone belongs to a group of medicines that are called antiarrhythmic drugs. These drugs correct abnormal heart rhythms.

## Why has my pet been prescribed amiodarone?

Amiodarone is used to treat abnormal heart rhythms that originate from within the heart. Some abnormal heart rhythms will interfere with the pumping of blood around the body, resulting in fatigue and collapse and, sadly, at their worse, sudden death. Abnormal heart rhythms may develop as a consequence of other heart conditions or can occur in isolation. Amiodarone is usually used in patients that have failed to improve on other antiarrhythmic drugs but it can be used first line.

## How should I store amiodarone?

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 amiodarone tablets to my pet?

Try to disguise them in a small quantity of strongly flavoured food that your pet likes. Alternatively, they 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 amiodarone?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients and could be for the rest of their life. If you are unsure whether you should continue a medication, always contact your vet before stopping it.

## What should I do if I run out of tablets?

Try not to run out of tablets. Make sure you order more tablets 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 has an overdose of amiodarone. An overdose may result in generalized weakness, collapse and an abnormally slow heartbeat.

## Can my pet take amiodarone 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. Careful dose adjustments are required if amiodarone is given to dogs also receiving certain types of anticoagulants (drugs that reduce blood clotting) or other antiarrhythmic drugs such as beta blockers, calcium channel blockers, digoxin, procainamide or quinidine (all used in heart conditions). Amiodarone should be avoided if your pet is taking ciclosporin (used for atopy, a common allergic skin condition), methotrexate (used to treat some forms of cancer), theophylline (used in respiratory disease) or cimetidine (used to treat stomach ulcers). If you have any concerns about using amiodarone with other medications, please ask your vet for further advice.

## What are the possible side effects of amiodarone for my pet?

Amiodarone can cause a loss of appetite and a drop in blood pressure, which would make your pet feel generally tired, inactive and weak. Occasionally, liver problems have been reported in dogs taking amiodarone, so your vet should check your pet's liver with blood tests before and during administration. Amiodarone can also have an impact on thyroid function, making it run slower than normal (hypothyroid), and during this should also be checked with blood tests before and during administration. Side effects seen in people include vomiting, hypothyroidism, and eye and lung problems. If your pet shows *any* unusual symptoms whilst taking this medication, please contact your vet.

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

If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, you should not give any further doses and contact your vet as soon as possible for advice.

## 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 a person accidentally takes this drug?**

If a person accidentally takes your pet's tablets, the person should be taken to the local hospital **immediately**. Take this leaflet and any remaining tablets 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 amiodarone.