

Tramadol (*Ultram*[®])

by Dr. Carrie Journey DVM, DACVIM (Neurology)

SUMMARY:

- 1) Common side effects include sedation, incoordination and constipation

EXPLANATION:

Tramadol is a pain medication. It may be used alone or as an addition to other types of pain medications.

Most of tramadol's side effects are dose dependant- meaning that they they will be more prevalent at higher doses. If your pet is experiencing unacceptable side effects, contact your veterinarian to discuss changing the dose.

Side Effects:

- 1) Constipation: Many pets will become constipated while on this medication. You can treat constipation by feeding your pet 1-2 teaspoons of canned pumpkin for every 10 pounds of body weight. Make sure that you purchase canned pumpkin and NOT pumpkin pie filling. If your pet is on a special diet, check with them before starting pumpkin.
- 2) Some pets will be sleepy or have difficulty walking on this medication.
- 3) Dysphoria: Some pets can become very agitated on this medication. They can frantically whine and pant. This is especially common on high doses or when this medication is combined with other medications like sedatives. It can look very similar to pain and can be very confusing. Sometimes we have to experiment with giving different doses or timing of medications to prevent this. If you believe your pet is experiencing this, contact your veterinarian for guidance.
- 4) Rarely this medication can cause behavior changes like mania or aggression. If this occurs discontinue the medication and contact your veterinarian. If your pet is acting aggressively, try to isolate your pet to a room and give the medication time to wear off. Remember they are not acting normally, and you need to be careful about your safety.
- 5) This medication can cause respiratory depression, but this side effect is rarely observed at normal doses.
- 6) This medication can cause seizures in some people, but this had not been reported in dogs and cats. Dr. Journey has consistently used this medication safely in seizure patients. However, if your pet has a seizure condition and you notice an increase in seizures while on this medication, discontinue the tramadol and contact your veterinarian.

****This medication should be kept well out of reach of children and pets.****

