

Diltiazem

Cardizem® and Dilacor® are other names for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?

- Diltiazem allows the heart to work more efficiently and is used to treat heart disease in dogs and cats.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?

- Diltiazem is removed from the body by the liver and kidneys and should be used cautiously in pets who have liver or kidney disease.
- If your pet already has a very low blood pressure or a condition known as "AV block", diltiazem is probably not the best drug for your pet.
- Diltiazem has caused birth defects in animals and should not be used in pregnancy.
- If your animal has any of the above conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks of using the medication versus the benefits that it might have.

What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?

- Diltiazem does not have many side effects, but the most common one is a very slow heart rate.
- Sometimes diltiazem can cause stomach upset, low blood pressure, irregular heart rate, rashes and abnormal liver tests.

How Should It Be Given?

- The successful outcome of your animal's treatment with this medication depends upon your commitment and ability to administer it exactly as the veterinarian has prescribed. Please do not skip doses or stop giving the medication. If you have difficulty giving doses consult your veterinarian or pharmacist who can offer administration techniques or change the dosage form to a type of medication that may be more acceptable to you and your animal.

- If you miss a dose of this medication you should give it as soon as you remember it, but if it is within a few hours of the regularly scheduled dose, wait and give it at the regular time. Do not double a dose as this can be toxic to your pet.
- Some other drugs can interact with this medication so tell your veterinarian about any drugs or foods that you currently give your animal. Do not give new foods or medications without first asking your veterinarian.
- **Dogs and Cats:** Dogs usually receive this medication as a "long acting form" (Dilacor®) twice daily or as the non-long-acting form three times daily. Cats may receive the long acting form as Cardizem® once daily or Dilacor® XR twice daily. Cats should receive the non-long-acting form three times daily.
- **Horses:** Horses do not receive diltiazem.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

- All forms of diltiazem should be stored in a tight, light resistant, child proof container away from all children and other household pets
- Dilacor® capsules contain a given amount of long acting "tablets" within the capsule. Your veterinarian or pharmacist will tell you how to open up the capsule and how to administer the tablets within.
- Cardizem® capsules will contain fixed proportions of long versus immediate acting "beads" within the capsule. Your pharmacist or veterinarian will tell you how to open up the capsule and how to measure the beads for the appropriate dose for your pet.
- Long acting forms of diltiazem should not be crushed prior to administration.