Carbamazepine
(kar-bam-aye-zuh-peen)

**Description:** Anticonvulsant, Nerve Pain Reliever, & Behavior Modifying Agent

**Other Names for this Medication:** Tegretol®, Carbatrol®

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** None. **Human:** 100 mg & 200 mg oral tablets; 100 mg chewable tablets; 100 mg, 200 mg, 300 mg, & 400 mg (tablets) extended-release oral tablets and capsules.

This information sheet does not contain all available information for this medication. It is to help answer commonly asked questions and help you give the medication safely and effectively to your animal. If you have other questions or need more information about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.

**Key Information**

- Little information has been published on use and adverse effects for veterinary patients; may be used to treat several different neurologic or behavioral conditions.
- Many possible drug interactions; do not give other medicines to your animal without first checking with your veterinarian.
- May be given with or without food. If your animal vomits or acts sick after receiving this medicine on an empty stomach, try giving the next dose with food or a small treat. If vomiting continues, contact your veterinarian.
- May require dosing multiple times per day.
- If using extended-release forms, do not crush.
- **Pregnant women should handle this drug cautiously as it may cause birth defects.**

**How is this medication useful?**

Carbamazepine may be used to treat several neurologic conditions or behavioral problems in dogs, cats, and horses. These indications include: aggression (threatening behavior and actions), seizures, nerve pain, and head-shaking in response to light (phobic head shaking) in horses. 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. 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 can interact with carbamazepine, so be sure to tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including vitamins, supplements, or herbal therapies) you give your animal, including 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 are allergic to it or tricyclic antidepressant drugs (eg, clomipramine, amitriptyline).
- That have depressed bone marrow function.
- That, within the past 14 days, have been exposed to certain flea collars and dips containing amitraz (a monoamine oxidase [MAO] inhibitor) or other MAO inhibitor drugs.

This drug should be used WITH CAUTION in patients:

- That have liver disease.
- That are pregnant.

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

What are the side effects of this medication?

Carbamazepine has not been used much in veterinary medicine so its side effects are not well known. Side effects that have been reported in humans could also occur in animals.

**Side effects that are usually not serious include:**

- Vomiting, reduced appetite.
- Sleepiness, dizziness.

You don’t have to be overly concerned if you see any 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:**

- Lack of energy, bleeding, bruising, fever.
- Skin rashes, redness, or sores.
- Yellowing of the whites of the eyes, skin, or gums (jaundice).
- Severe vomiting, diarrhea, or loss of appetite.

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?

If you witness or suspect an overdose, 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 has prescribed. It’s a good idea to always check the prescription label to be sure you are giving the drug correctly.

- The drug 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.
- If you have difficulty getting your animal to take the medicine, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist for tips to help with dosing and reducing the stress of medication time.
Liquid forms of this medication must be measured carefully. Your veterinarian or pharmacist can help by providing special measuring spoons or syringes.

This medication can be given for various lengths of time. Be sure you understand how long your veterinarian wants you to continue giving this medication. Prescription refills may be necessary before the therapy will be complete. Do not stop this medication suddenly without talking to your veterinarian; doing so may cause your animal to feel sick. Before completely stopping this medication, talk to your veterinarian, 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, but if it is close to the time for the next dose, skip the dose you missed and give it at the next scheduled time. After that, return to the regular dosing schedule. Do not double-up or give extra doses.

How should I store this medication?
- Store this medication in the original prescription bottle or an approved airtight dosage reminder container (ie, pill minder) at room temperature and protected from light and moisture. Carbamazepine potency can be severely affected by humidity.
- If your veterinarian or pharmacist has made (compounded) a special formulation for your animal, follow the storage recommendations and expiration date for the product.
- Keep away from children and other animals.

Can handling this medication be hazardous to me, my family, or other animals?
Because this drug has a higher risk for causing birth defects, pregnant women should be very careful not to accidentally take it. Wear disposable gloves when giving doses or handling the drug and avoid inhaling any dust from split or crushed tablets. Skin or eyes exposed to powder or liquids containing the drug should immediately be washed or rinsed off thoroughly and your physician contacted.

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?
- Certain flea and tick collars and dips containing amitraz (an MAO inhibitor) should not be worn or used within 14 days of receiving carbamazepine.
- Use of this drug may not be allowed in certain animal competitions. 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.