Clonidine

(klo-\text{n}-i-deen)

Description: Behavior modifying drug; antidiarrheal
Other Names for this Medication: Catapres®, Duraclon®
Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: None. Human: 0.1 mg, 0.2 mg, & 0.3 mg oral tablets; 0.1 mg extended-release tablets; 0.1 mg/24 hr, 0.2 mg/24 hr, & 0.3 mg/24 hr transdermal patches.

Key Information
- 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.
- Little experience with using this drug in dogs or cats. Sleepiness and low blood pressure are the most likely side effects. Report unusual effects to your veterinarian.
- When used to treat fear-based behavioral problems, clonidine is usually given 90 minutes to 2 hours before an expected event. Doses are started low and then gradually increased depending on side effects and how well the medicine works. Clonidine may be used up to two times a day for longer term treatment.
- Best results when this medicine is used with behavioral modification training for fear-based problems.
- If you are giving this medication to your animal on a daily basis, do not stop giving it or change the dose without first talking to your veterinarian.

How is this medication useful?
Clonidine may be used to treat fear-based anxiety and behavioral problems (eg, veterinary visit fears) in dogs. It may also be prescribed to treat severe diarrhea associated with inflammatory bowel disease in dogs and cats.

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 clonidine, 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 may 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.

This drug should be used WITH CAUTION in:
- That have heart disease.
- That have kidney disease.

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?

Clonidine has not been commonly used in dogs or cats, so its adverse effects are not well known. The following effects have been seen in people and may be seen in dogs or cats, but others are possible. Contact your veterinarian if you see unusual effects in your animal.

**Side effects that usually are not serious include:**
- Sleepiness, weakness, lack of energy.
- Excitation.
- Sleep disturbances.
- Unusual behavior changes.

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 or if you have other concerns about your animal while on this medicine.

**Side effects that may be serious or indicate a serious problem:**
- Collapse (passing out).

Call your veterinarian immediately if this sign occurs.

If my animal gets too much of this medication (an overdose), what should I do?

Overdoses of clonidine can be serious. 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.
- When used as needed for fear-based behavioral issues in dogs, it is usually given 90 minutes to two hours before the expected event.
- Compounded liquid forms of this medication must be measured carefully. Your veterinarian or pharmacist can help by providing special measuring spoons or syringes.
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.

This medication can be given for various lengths of time. Be sure you understand how long the veterinarian wants you to continue giving this medication. Prescription refills may be necessary before the therapy will be complete.

If you are giving this medication on a daily basis, do not stop giving it or change the dose without first talking to your veterinarian.

**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 dosage reminder container (i.e., pill minder) at room temperature and protected from light.
- 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?**
There are no specific precautions required when handling this medication unless you are allergic to it. Wash your hands after handling any medication.

**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?**
- When used for fear-based behavioral issues, clonidine usually works best in combination with behavior modification therapy.
- 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.**