

Hydralazine

Hydralazine may also be known by the following synonyms and internationally registered trade names: apressinum, hydralazini, hydrallazine, idralazina, *Alphapress*®, *Apresolin*®, *Apresolina*®, *Bionobal*®, *Cesoline*®, *Hidral*®, *Hydrapres*®, *Hyperex*®, *Hyperphen*®, *Ipolina*®, *Nepresol*®, *Novo-Hylazin*®, *Nu-Hydral*®, *Rolazine*®, *Slow-Apresoline*®, and *Supres*®.

How Is This Medication Useful?

Hydralazine is used to treat high blood pressure in dogs, and is especially important when the problem becomes severe (greater than 200 mmHg). It is also used to treat severe heart failure. Hydralazine dilates the dilates the blood vessels, especially the small arteries, to decrease blood pressure and give relief to a failing heart that is working harder than it needs to .

In dogs, hydralazine is rapidly absorbed after oral administration with an onset of action within one hour and peak effects at 3-5 hours. The presence of food may enhance the bioavailability of hydralazine tablets.

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

Hydralazine should not be given to pets that are dehydrated, as blood pressure can drop so low as to be unsafe.

Hydralazine should not be used in animals who are allergic to it or severely allergic to other drugs like it.

Hydralazine should be used with caution in dogs with severe kidney failure, bleeding in the brain, autoimmune disease or low blood pressure. If your dog has any of these problems, please discuss them with your veterinarian to make sure that hydralazine is the right drug for your dog.

Hydralazine is safe for use in pregnant and lactating dogs and cats, if used cautiously. Studies in laboratory animals may have uncovered some risk, but these drugs appear to be safe in dogs and cats if they are not administered when the animal is near term. Hydralazine is excreted in milk. Exercise caution, but according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, hydralazine is compatible with breastfeeding.

What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?

If dosage is not adjusted properly, hydralazine can cause low blood pressure. Your dog should have blood pressure checked once weekly when first taking hydralazine, until

blood pressure is in the target range (120-150 mm Hg). If blood pressure drops too low, hydralazine can cause lack of energy, poor appetite, or increased heart rate. Initially, temporary weakness and lethargy can be seen, but usually resolve in 3-4 days.

Hydralazine can cause sodium/water retention, especially if not given concurrently with a diuretic).

Occasionally, hydralazine can cause gastrointestinal upset (vomiting, diarrhea). If you note any problems at all after your pet starts taking hydralazine, please call your vet as soon as possible to discuss adjusting the dose.

How Should It Be Given?

Hydralazine is best given with food for best absorption.

Giving hydralazine with *phenylpropanolamine (Proin)* (used as a nasal decongestant and for urinary incontinence) may cause increased heart rate.

Hydralazine may enhance the oral absorption of *propranolol or other beta-blockers* used for heart failure and abnormal heart rhythm.

Other antihypertensive agents, e.g., *ACE inhibitors such as enalapril (Enacard, Vasotec), lisinopril and benazopril* may cause additive hypotension (low blood pressure).

Hydralazine may increase the renal excretion of *digoxin*, another drug given for severe heart failure or abnormal heart rhythm. If these drugs are given together, dose of digoxin may need to be increased to achieve the same effect.

Hydralazine may increase *furosemide's* effects on the kidneys. Furosemide (Lasix, Salix, Disal) is a diuretic used to treat heart failure and other conditions.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

Hydralazine tablets should be stored in tight, light resistant containers at room temperature.