Alprazolam

(Alprazolam*, Xanax*) POM

- **Client Information Leaflet:** Alprazolam
- **Formulations**

Oral: 0.25 mg, 0.5 mg, 1 mg, 2 mg tablets.

- **Action**

Increases GABA activity within the CNS, resulting in anxiolysis and a range of cognitive effects including the inhibition of memory.

- **Use**
    - Treatment of anxiety and fear-related disorders in dogs and cats, especially where there are signs of panic.
    - As an adjunct to clomipramine or specific serotonin reuptake inhibitors (e.g fluoxetine) for the management of phobic responses.
    - It can also be used for the management of urine spraying in cats but a high relapse rate upon withdrawal should be expected.

Best if used approximately 30 minutes before a fear-inducing event although absorption characteristics have not been described for cats or dogs. Its short half-life and rapid onset of action make it useful for the management of acute episodes, with treatment given as needed within the dosing limits described. However, dosing limits and responses are very variable, with some animals showing no measurable effect at the recommended doses. Its anterograde and retrograde amnesic properties, especially on subjective memory, mean it can be used before (<1 hour), during or immediately following an aversive experience to minimize emotional impact. This may be necessary during a long-term behavioural therapy programme to avoid relapses due to exposure to an intense fear-inducing stimulus during treatment. In experimental circumstances, single higher range doses (>0.25 mg/kg) have been found to block memory significantly and may be useful in companion animals, but may result in temporary sedation. As imepitoin is now authorized for the treatment of fears in dogs, if a benzodiazepine is indicated, it is preferable to use this.

More +

- **DOSES**
    - **Dogs** Anxiolysis: initial dose of 0.01–0.1 mg/kg p.o. as needed up to 4 times a day; the dose can be titrated up or down to the minimum effective dose, which may be below this level.
    - **Cats** Anxiolysis: initial dose of 0.125–0.25 mg/kg p.o. as needed up to twice a day is suggested, but doses as low as 0.25 mg/cat p.o. q8–12h and as high as 0.6 mg/kg p.o. have been reported. After initial medication, the dose should be titrated down to the minimum effective dose.