

Warning on Acepromazine

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There is one drug commonly used in anesthetic protocols that should not be used in the Boxer. The drug is Acepromazine, a tranquilizer, which is often used as a pre-anesthetic agent. In the Boxer, it tends to cause a problem called first degree heart block, a potentially serious arrhythmia of the heart. It also causes a profound hypotension (severe lowering of the blood pressure) in many Boxers that receive the drug. Recently, on the Veterinary Information Network, a computer network for practicing veterinarians, an announcement was placed in the cardiology section entitled "Acepromazine and Boxers." This described several adverse reactions to the drug in a very short time span at a veterinary teaching hospital. All the adverse reactions were in Boxers. The reactions included collapse, respiratory arrest, and profound bradycardia (slow heart rate, less than 60 beats per minute). The announcement suggested that Acepromazine should not be used in dogs of the Boxer breed because of a breed related sensitivity to the drug.

WARNING:

This drug is the most commonly prescribed tranquilizer in veterinary medicine. It is also used orally and is prescribed for owners who want to tranquilize their dogs for air or car travel. I would strongly recommend that Boxer owners avoid the use of this drug, especially when the dog will be unattended and/or unable to receive emergency medical care if it is needed.

Submitted by: Wendy Wallner, DVM July, 1997