

# Acepromazine

(*ase-pro-ma-zeen*)

**Category:** Sedative/Tranquilizer (causes sleepiness)

**Other Names for this Medication:** “Ace”, PromAce®, Aceproject®, Acepro tabs®

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** 10 mg, 25 mg tablets. **Human:** None. Compounded dosage forms may be available.

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

- ▶ Causes sedation (sleepiness), but does not reduce anxiety or fear.
- ▶ When giving by mouth, give dose 45-60 minutes before the procedure or trip for best effect. Your veterinarian may recommend a trial dose a few days before travel to see how the drug will affect your animal.
- ▶ Sedative or tranquilizing effects (sleepiness) and side effects may last up to 24 hours. It is best to see how your animal responds to this medication prior to needing it.
- ▶ Keep treated animal in a quiet, comfortable temperature and environment.
- ▶ This drug may give urine a pinkish to reddish-brown color; this is not to be worried about.
- ▶ Do not give other medicines with this drug to tranquilize or sedate your animal unless instructed by your veterinarian.

## How is this medication useful?

In dogs, cats, ferrets, small mammals, horses, and some other species, acepromazine is most commonly used to sedate before surgery or stressful procedures. Because of its tranquilizing and anti-emetic effects (reduces vomiting), it is sometimes used before travel in animals with motion sickness, but routine use for air travel is generally not recommended.

The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for use in dogs, cats, and horses. The FDA does allow veterinarians to prescribe and use products containing this drug in other animal species and 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 acepromazine, 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.

## 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 drugs like it (other phenothiazine drugs like chlorpromazine).
- ▶ With very low blood pressure (shock).
- ▶ With severe heart disease.
- ▶ With tetanus (lockjaw).
- ▶ Poisoned with strychnine or organophosphate pesticides.

This drug should be used **WITH CAUTION** in:

- ▶ Animals that have epilepsy or other seizure disorders.
- ▶ Animals with liver disease, are old or are in a poor state of health or nutrition.
- ▶ Animals exposed to high or low temperatures as acepromazine may affect an animal's ability to regulate its body temperature; use is usually avoided.
- ▶ Aggressive or unpredictable dogs. Some dogs may react violently.
- ▶ Boxers (and possibly other short nose, flat-faced breeds such as Pugs, Pekingese, and Boston terriers). Acepromazine use in these breeds is controversial.
- ▶ Collie-type dog breeds (eg, Collies, Australian shepherds, Shetland sheepdogs [Shelties]) may have a genetic mutation that can cause them to be more sensitive to the sedation effects (drowsiness/sleepiness) of this drug.
- ▶ Giant-breed dogs and sight hounds (eg, Greyhounds, Afghans, Salukis) may be more sensitive to the sedative effects of this drug.
- ▶ Aggressive or unpredictable horses. Horses may startle to loud noises.
- ▶ Male horses. Acepromazine may cause penis prolapse (protrusion) with resulting damage to the penis.

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

**What are the side effects of this medication?**

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

- ▶ Slightly slowed breathing.
- ▶ Unsteadiness or incoordination, especially in the rear legs.
- ▶ Eye droopiness and appearance of third eyelid in the corner of the eye.
- ▶ Urine may be colored pinkish or reddish-brown; this is not to be worried about.
- ▶ Rarely, acepromazine can have the opposite reaction from expected in which the animal (usually cats) becomes excited and overly aggressive.
- ▶ Penile protrusion in male horses; be sure penis is not injured.
- ▶ Loud sounds may startle horses.

You generally don't have to be concerned if you see any of these 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:**

- ▶ Seizures (convulsions), twitching, collapse, trouble breathing, swelling of lips, tongue or face, hives.

If you see any of these, contact your veterinarian immediately.

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

Small oral overdoses of acepromazine are generally not serious, but large overdoses may be cause for concern. 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: **Pet Poison HELPLINE** (855-764-7661) and **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center** (888-426-4435); 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.

- ▶ May be given with or without food. 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 giving acepromazine by mouth (tablets) to small animals, give 45 minutes to one hour before needed.
- ▶ If you have difficulty getting your animal to take the medicine, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist for tips to help dosing and reducing the stress of medication time.
- ▶ 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. Before 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?**

Usually acepromazine is given one time, but if it is to be repeated and you miss a dose, give it when you remember, but do not double-up doses. Once a dose has been given, wait the time recommended by your veterinarian before giving another dose.

**How should I store this medication?**

- ▶ Store this medication in the original prescription bottle or an approved dosage reminder (ie, pill minder) container at room temperature; protect from strong light (direct sunlight or close to a light bulb).
- ▶ 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 pets?**

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 left over medication for future use or give it to others to use.

**What other information is important for this medication?**

- ▶ 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. Contact your local racing authority for further guidance.

**If you have any other questions or concerns about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.**