

Firocoxib (Dogs)

(*feer-oh-koks-ib*)

Category: Nonsteroidal Antiinflammatory Agent (NSAID)

Other Names for this Medication: Previcox®

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: 57 mg & 227 mg chewable tablets.

Human: None.

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

- ▶ Can give with or without food, but food may reduce the chances for stomach problems. If your pet 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.
- ▶ Most dogs tolerate firocoxib well, but some will (rarely) develop stomach ulcers or serious kidney and liver problems. Watch for: Eating less than normal, vomiting, or changes in bowel movements; changes in behavior or activity levels (more or less active than normal), incoordination (eg, stumbling, clumsiness), seizures (convulsions), or aggression; yellowing of gums, skin, or whites of the eyes (jaundice); and changes in drinking (frequency, amount consumed) or urination habits (frequency, color, or smell).
- ▶ Store chewable tablets well out of reach of animals and children.
- ▶ Periodic laboratory tests to check for liver and kidney side effects are required.

How is this medication useful?

Firocoxib is used in dogs for the control of pain and inflammation associated with osteoarthritis and for the control of postoperative pain and inflammation associated with soft-tissue and orthopedic surgery.

The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for use in dogs. The FDA does allow veterinarians to prescribe and use 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 may cause problems when taken with firocoxib, 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 pet 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 pet 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:

- ▶ Dogs that are allergic to it or other drugs like it (eg, deracoxib, other NSAIDs, aspirin).
- ▶ Dogs that weigh less than 12.5 lb (5.7 kg), as the tablets cannot be accurately dosed in these animals. Compounded forms of firocoxib may be appropriate for these dogs.
- ▶ Cats: Firocoxib is not approved for use in cats in the USA as they can rapidly develop toxicity from the drug.

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

- ▶ That have stomach or gastrointestinal ulcers or have had them in the past. Firocoxib may make these ulcers worse or come back.
- ▶ That are dehydrated or on diuretic treatment (eg, furosemide, hydrochlorothiazide).
- ▶ That have pre-existing kidney, heart, and/or liver problems. These patients are at greater risk for developing kidney problems. Your veterinarian will check for these before prescribing firocoxib.
- ▶ That are pregnant, lactating, or are breeding animals. It is not known if firocoxib is safe to use in these animals.
- ▶ Dogs less than 7 months old. It is not known if firocoxib is safe to use in these animals.
- ▶ That are taking other NSAIDs (eg, deracoxib, etodolac, carprofen, meloxicam), aspirin, or corticosteroids (eg, prednisone, methylprednisolone, dexamethasone), as there is a greater chance of adverse effects occurring.
- ▶ That have a bleeding disorder (eg, Von Willebrand disease).
- ▶ That are very old.

If your pet 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?

Firocoxib is tolerated well in the vast majority of dogs, but rarely, serious side effects (stomach ulcers, liver, or kidney problems) and sometimes death have been reported.

Side effects that may be serious or indicate a serious problem:

- ▶ Decrease in appetite (eating less than normal), weight loss, vomiting, changes in bowel movements (such as diarrhea, or black, tarry or bloody stools).
- ▶ Changes in behavior or activity levels (more or less active than normal), incoordination (eg, stumbling, clumsiness), seizures or aggression (threatening behavior or actions).
- ▶ Yellowing of gums, skin, or whites of the eyes (jaundice).
- ▶ Changes in drinking (frequency, amount consumed) or urination habits (frequency, color, or smell).
- ▶ Changes in skin (redness, scabs, or scratching).

If you see any of these signs, stop giving the drug and contact your veterinarian immediately. Other rare adverse effects have also been reported, so contact your veterinarian if you have any concerns about your pet while on this drug.

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

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, but giving with food may reduce the chances of stomach problems occurring. If your pet 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.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Patients are usually on this medication for an extended period, often for the rest of their lives. Give this medication according to the label's instructions and obtain refills as needed. 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?

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 (ie, pill minder) at room temperature.
- ▶ 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. The chewable forms of this drug may be very appealing to dogs; be sure to store in a secure area.

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?

- ▶ For the safety of your animal, your veterinarian will need to do periodic blood tests while your pet is receiving firocoxib. Do not miss these important follow-up visits.
- ▶ 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 or concerns about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.