

Itraconazole

(ey-tra-kon-a-zole)

Category: Antifungal

Other Names for this Medication: Sporanox®, Itrafungol®

Common Dosage Forms: **Veterinary:** 10 mg/mL oral liquid. **Human:** 100 mg capsules; 200 mg tablets.

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

- ▶ Give itraconazole with high-fat foods (eg, cheese, cream, butter) to increase absorption.
- ▶ This drug has many drug interactions; do not start new medications without first checking with your veterinarian or pharmacist.
- ▶ Gastrointestinal effects (eg, lack of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea) are the most common side effects, especially in cats. Watch for persistent vomiting, poor appetite, or yellowing of gums or whites of the eyes (jaundice). If these signs are seen, stop giving the drug, and contact your veterinarian immediately, as liver toxicity is possible.
- ▶ Only use itraconazole when absolutely necessary in pregnant or breeding animals, as this drug may cause birth defects in animals and reduce fertility in males.

How is this medication useful?

Itraconazole is used to treat fungal infections in animals.

The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for use in humans, but it is not officially approved for use in animals. The FDA allows veterinarians to prescribe 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 can interact with this drug, 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 patients:

- ▶ That are allergic to it or other azole antifungals (eg, fluconazole, ketoconazole).

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

- ▶ Nursing or pregnant animals. Itraconazole can reach high concentrations in milk and may not be safe for nursing offspring.
- ▶ Animals that have liver disease.
- ▶ African grey parrots. They appear to be sensitive to itraconazole.

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?

Side effects that usually are not serious include:

- ▶ Vomiting and loss of appetite are the most common side effects seen in dogs and cats.

You don't have to be overly concerned if you see either of these effects 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:

- ▶ Liver toxicity. Signs that might be seen include persistent vomiting, severe or bloody diarrhea, lack of appetite, yellowing of eyes, skin, or gums (jaundice), tender or painful abdomen (stomach), bleeding, seizures (convulsions), or severe changes in behavior.
- ▶ Skin ulcers, sores, rashes.
- ▶ Leg swelling.

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

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: **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.

- ▶ Itraconazole capsules should be given with food. Giving it with a fatty food such as butter, cream, or cheese helps the drug to be absorbed.
- ▶ If you are giving the oral liquid, your veterinarian may instruct you to give it either without food or with fatty foods.
- ▶ Itraconazole requires an adequate amount of stomach acid for it to be absorbed into the blood. Do not give your animal antacid medicines (eg, famotidine, ranitidine, omeprazole) while giving this drug unless your veterinarian instructs you to.
- ▶ To make sure your animal receives the correct dose of itraconazole, your veterinarian or pharmacist may divide the contents of the capsules into smaller sized capsules or advise you to open the capsules to give the correct dose (eg, half of the pellet).
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 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?

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?

- ▶ Itraconazole capsules should be stored in the original prescription bottle or an approved dosage reminder container (ie, pill minder) at room temperature and protected from light and moisture.
- ▶ Itraconazole oral liquid should be stored at temperatures less than 79°F (26°C), and protected from freezing.
- ▶ 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.

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