

Meropenem

(mer-oh-pen-em)

Category: Carbapenem Antibiotic

Other Names for this Medication: Merrem®

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: None. **Human:** 500 mg & 1 gram vials to reconstitute for injection.

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

- ▶ Meropenem must be injected in the vein or under the skin; it does not work if given by mouth.
- ▶ Fur may become thinner or change color over the injection site.

How is this medication useful?

In dogs and cats, meropenem is used to treat serious bacterial infections that have become resistant to other antibiotics.

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 meropenem, 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 drugs like it (eg, ertapenem, imipenem).

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

- ▶ Have kidney problems.

If your animal matches either of these conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the possible risks of using the medication versus the benefits.

What are the side effects of this medication?

Common but not serious side effects include:

- ▶ Discoloration or loss of fur over the injection site.
- ▶ Stinging at the injection site.

You don't have to be overly concerned if you see any of these signs 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:

- ▶ Loss of appetite (especially in cats).
- ▶ Increased drinking or urinating may indicate kidney problems.
- ▶ Low energy level, rashes, trouble breathing, and signs of anemia (eg, pale gums) may indicate an allergic reaction to the drug.

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?

Meropenem overdoses can be serious and cause damage to the kidneys, nervous system, and liver. 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.

By Injection:

- ▶ Your veterinarian or pharmacist will give you all of the items you need to mix the solution for injection and give the shots (ie, needles, syringes, diluent). If the medicine needs to be mixed before you give it, mix it exactly as your veterinarian or pharmacist tells you.
- ▶ Because this drug must be injected, be sure you understand the proper dosage, location(s), and method for giving the shots.
- ▶ Use a new needle and syringe each time you give an injection (shot) or mix a vial. Do not reuse needles and syringes.
- ▶ It is important to equalize the pressure in the vial when adding diluent. Your pharmacist or veterinarian will show you how to add diluent in a way that does not cause the liquid to spray back out of the vial.
- ▶ After adding the diluent liquid, shake the vial until the liquid is

clear. Your veterinarian will usually have you further dilute the entire vial into another larger bag of fluids for administration under the skin.

- ▶ Liquid solutions break down quickly if not mixed exactly as instructed and stored in the refrigerator. Once solutions are mixed, the expiration date varies, but it can be no longer than 5 days. Do not use any mixed liquid after this expiration date.
- ▶ Injections (shots) may sting when given. If your animal objects to the injections too much, your veterinarian may be able to give you something to mix with the liquid to help it sting less.
- ▶ If you are giving these shots at home, place used needles and syringes in a sharps disposal container immediately after they have been used. Your veterinarian or pharmacist will help you obtain these containers. Be careful not to accidentally stick yourself; do not attempt to disconnect the needle from the syringe. Keep containers out of reach of children and pets. Once about $\frac{3}{4}$ full, dispose of containers according to your community guidelines. Check with your local trash removal services or health department (listed online and in the city or county government [blue] pages in your phone book) to see which disposal methods are available in your area.
- ▶ 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?

- ▶ Store this medication in its original prescription bottle. Unmixed vials may be stored at room temperature protected from light. Once mixed, the liquid must be stored in the refrigerator. Liquid solutions break down quickly if not mixed exactly as instructed and refrigerated. Once the solution is mixed, the expiration date varies, but it can be no longer than 5 days. Do not use any mixed liquid after the listed expiration date.
- ▶ 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.