

Metoclopramide

(met-oh-kloe-pra-midee)

Category: Gastrointestinal Prokinetic Agent

Other Names for this Medication: Reglan®

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: None. **Human:** Oral Tablets: 5 mg & 10 mg; Disintegrating Tablets: 5 mg & 10 mg; Oral Syrup: 1 mg/mL; Injection: 5 mg/mL.

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

- ▶ May be given by mouth with or without food. Sometimes given under the skin (subcutaneously), especially when vomiting is an issue.
- ▶ Usually tolerated well by dogs and cats. Contact your veterinarian if animal develops severe restlessness or hyperactivity, rigid posture, spasms, aggression, or severe drowsiness or depression. May cause your animal to need to go outside to urinate more frequently. Cats may show signs of frenzied behavior or disorientation. Both dogs and cats can become constipated.

How is this medication useful?

Metoclopramide is used in dogs, cats, and small mammals (eg, hamsters, gerbils) to stimulate the stomach and upper small intestine. This action helps prevent esophageal reflux (stomach acid backing up into the esophagus and throat) and move food and hairballs from the stomach into the intestines. Metoclopramide is also used in dogs and cats to help prevent vomiting, induce milk let-down, and promote milk production. It is sometimes used in horses to treat esophageal reflux or stimulate the upper small intestine, but it is usually given as a shot for these purposes. Metoclopramide is not useful to treat constipation, as it has little effect on the colon/large intestine.

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 medication, 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:

- ▶ Animals that are allergic to it or to the sunscreen PABA (para-amino benzoic acid).
- ▶ Animals with blockage or bleeding in their stomach or intestines.
- ▶ Dogs with pseudopregnancy (false pregnancy).
- ▶ Animals with a tumor called pheochromocytoma.

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

- ▶ That have a seizure disorder (eg, epilepsy), have suffered head trauma, or have had seizures in the past (use extreme caution).
- ▶ With kidney disease.

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

What are the side effects of this medication?

In dogs and cats, metoclopramide is normally tolerated well.

Side effects that usually are not serious include:

- ▶ Dogs: Restlessness or hyperactivity, involuntary spasms or twitching, drowsiness or depression, constipation, increased urination frequency.
- ▶ Cats: Disoriented ("out of it"), frenzied behavior, constipation.

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:

- ▶ Dogs: Aggression (threatening behavior or actions).
- ▶ Horses: Behavioral changes (alternating between sleepiness/fatigue and excited behavior), abdominal pain. These usually are only seen when the drug is injected into the vein very fast. Foals have less risk for these effects occurring.

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

If my animal 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.

- ▶ When given by mouth, metoclopramide may be given either with food or on an empty stomach. 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.
- ▶ If your veterinarian has instructed you to give this medication by injection under the skin (subcutaneously), be sure you understand the proper places and technique to give it.
- ▶ 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 or accept the shots, 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, either, 1) skip the dose you missed and give it at the next scheduled time, then return to the regular dosing schedule, or 2) give it when you remember and then wait the amount of time between doses recommended by your veterinarian before giving another dose. 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 and protected from light.
- ▶ 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 or allergic to the sunscreen PABA, but it is always a good idea to wash your hands after handling any medication. If you are allergic to the medication (or PABA), wear gloves when handling and avoid inhaling any dust from split or crushed tablets.

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 leftover 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 are giving this medicine to your animal by 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 ¾ full, dispose 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.

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