

# Mirtazapine, Transdermal

(mir-taz-ah-peen)

**Category:** Appetite Stimulant

**Other Names for this Medication:** Mirataz®

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** Transdermal ointment 2% (20 mg/g). **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

- ▶ Used for management of weight loss in cats.
- ▶ Transdermal ointment may cause application site reactions such as reddening of the skin, crusting/scabbing, and residue.
- ▶ Common side effects include: vocalization, behavior changes, and tremors or shaking. Contact your veterinarian if your cat experiences excessive sleepiness or vocalization.
- ▶ Wear gloves before handling this medication. Avoid contact with treated cat for 2 hours after applying medicine.

## How is this medication useful?

Mirtazapine may be prescribed as an appetite stimulant to help manage weight loss in cats.

The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for management of weight loss in cats. 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 (including other appetite stimulant drugs such as cyproheptadine and oxazepam) can interact with mirtazapine, 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.
- ▶ That have received a MAOI (monoamine oxidase inhibitor, including selegiline or amitraz dips and collars) or have stopped taking one in the last 14 days.

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

- ▶ That have kidney disease. Dosages may need to be reduced or the drug may need to be given less often.
- ▶ That have heart disease, diabetes, severe liver disease, glaucoma, and gastrointestinal or urinary blockage.

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?

Mirtazapine is usually well tolerated in cats, but side effects can occur and are often seen within 90 minutes of a dose. Reducing the dose or giving smaller amounts more often may help limit these side effects.

### Common but not serious side effects include:

- ▶ Application site reactions (eg, reddening of the skin, crusting/scabbing, residue).
- ▶ Vocalization.
- ▶ Mild tremors or shaking.
- ▶ Sleepiness or acting tired.
- ▶ Increased affection.

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:

- ▶ Severe tremors, shaking.
- ▶ Severe hyperactivity, hyperexcitability (over-excitement) or agitation (nervous, upset, unable to relax).
- ▶ Low blood pressure (fainting, collapsing) if doses are too high.
- ▶ Fast heartbeat if doses are too high.

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 is a good idea to always check the prescription label to be sure you are giving the drug correctly.

- ▶ Mirtazapine ointment is applied every 24 hours. If side effects occur, your veterinarian may reduce the dose and/or have you apply the ointment every other day.
- ▶ If you have difficulty applying the medicine to your cat, 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, wait to give the next dose until the following day when it is usually time to do so and then resume daily dosing. Do not double-up or give extra doses.

**How should I store this medication?**

- ▶ Store this medication in the original container at room temperature and protected from light.
- ▶ Discard transdermal ointment within 30 days of first use.
- ▶ Keep away from children and other animals.

**Can handling this medication be hazardous to me, my family, or other pets?**

- ▶ Wear disposable gloves while handling this medication. Do not reuse gloves; once used, they should be thrown away.
- ▶ Wash your hands with soap and water after handling any medication.
- ▶ People or other animals in the household should not come in contact with the treated animal for 2 hours to reduce risk of exposure to the medicine. If accidental exposure occurs, wash area thoroughly with soap and water. If accidental eye exposure occurs, flush eyes with water.

**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?**

- ▶ Abrupt discontinuation of mirtazapine after long-term administration may cause signs of withdrawal.
- ▶ 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.**