

Pancrelipase

(pan-kree-*lih*-pase)

Category: Pancreatic Enzymes

Other Names for this Medication: Pancreatin, Viokase®, Pancrezyme®, several other trade name products are available.

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: Powder: 71,400 Units lipase; 388,000 Units protease; 460,000 Units amylase per teaspoon (2.8 g). Tablets and capsules may also be available. **Human:** Capsules, tablets, and powders are available containing lipase, protease, and amylase, in varying concentrations.

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

- ▶ Pancrelipase powder or crushed tablets are mixed in the food to help with digestion.
- ▶ Cats often do not like the taste of the powder form of pancrelipase and may be more easily dosed using solid dosage forms (enteric-coated tablets or capsules made from powder or crushed tablets). Some cats will eat food mixed with one brand of veterinary powder and refuse another.
- ▶ Use only products labeled for animals as the human formulations are not as strong and may not be as effective.
- ▶ If using solid dosage forms (capsules, tablets), be certain that your animal gets water or food right after dosing to reduce the risk for esophageal damage.
- ▶ Use caution to avoid inhaling powder as it can cause lung irritation and worsen asthma. If your skin comes into contact with the powder, wash it off immediately and contact your physician.

How is this medication useful?

Pancrelipase is used in animals to treat diarrhea and malnutrition when the pancreas does not produce enough digestive enzymes. In rabbits, it is also used to help break up fur balls. 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 pancrelipase, 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 pork products.

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

- ▶ That have mouth or esophageal ulcers; gum disease.

If your pet has any of these conditions, 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:

- ▶ High doses may cause diarrhea, vomiting, excessive gas, and stomach cramping.

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:

- ▶ Bleeding in the mouth, mouth and throat irritation, and esophageal ulcers. If using tablets or capsules, give food or water to your animal immediately after dosing. If using powder mixed into food, make sure the powder has been moistened before offering it to your animal.

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.

- ▶ Pancrelipase powder or crushed tablets are mixed in the food.
- ▶ Cats reportedly do not like the taste of the powder and may be more easily dosed using solid dosage forms (enteric-coated tablets or capsules made from powder or crushed tablets). Some cats will eat food mixed with one brand of veterinary powder and refuse another.

- ▶ If using capsules or tablets, be certain that your animal gets water or food right after dosing to reduce the risk for esophageal damage.
- ▶ When using in rabbits to help dissolve fur balls, pancrelipase powder is often mixed into yogurt.
- ▶ 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, mix with food the next time you feed your animal. Do not double-up or give extra doses.

How should I store this medication?

- ▶ Store this medication at room temperature in a dry place inside a tight container.
- ▶ 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?

- ▶ Inhalation of the powder can cause irritation of the lungs and throat and may trigger an asthma attack. Do not inhale the powder or let your animal inhale the powder.
- ▶ Pancrelipase powder can irritate or burn skin on contact. Wash immediately if you get any on your skin or your animal's skin.
- ▶ If powder gets into eyes, flush eyes with water for several minutes, and contact your physician.
- ▶ People with severe pork allergies should not handle this product.

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?

- ▶ Do not change your animal's diet while on this drug without your veterinarian's guidance.
- ▶ Once your animal's diarrhea gets better, your veterinarian may have you try decreasing the dose to the smallest amount that prevents diarrhea and allows weight gain.
- ▶ There are also pancrelipase products made for human use. These are less potent than products made for animals and are not recommended.
- ▶ 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.