

Potassium Chloride, Oral Potassium Gluconate, Oral

(po-*tass-ee-um klor-ide*; po-*tass-ee-um gloo-koe-nate*)

Category: Electrolyte

Other Names for this Medication: Tumul-K®, Kaon®, KCl

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: Potassium Gluconate Tablets: 2 mEq (468 mg). Potassium Gluconate Gel: Each 2.34 g (½ teaspoon) contains 2 mEq of potassium. **Human:** There are many oral potassium chloride and gluconate products available including tablets, capsules, and liquids.

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

- ▶ Oral potassium is best administered with food to help prevent stomach upset.
- ▶ Overdoses (both one-time and over a period of time) of potassium can be serious; contact your veterinarian immediately if you suspect an overdose.

How is this medication useful?

Oral potassium supplements may be used in animals when potassium levels in the blood are too low. 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 already have too much potassium in their body.
- ▶ That are unable to urinate.
- ▶ That cannot properly absorb potassium from their gastrointestinal tract.
- ▶ That have untreated Addison's disease, or dehydration.

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

- ▶ That are taking the drug digoxin.
- ▶ That have stomach ulcers.
- ▶ That have kidney problems.

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:

- ▶ Gastrointestinal distress (eg, nausea, stomach pain)

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:

- ▶ Hyperkalemia (too much potassium) can be much more serious than hypokalemia (too low potassium). Signs that can be seen with hyperkalemia include: muscular weakness, nausea, vomiting, heart rhythm problems, paralysis, or collapsing/passing out.

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?

Overdoses of potassium can be serious. 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.

- ▶ Oral potassium is best administered with food to help prevent stomach upset. Your veterinarian may have you mix the potassium supplement into food.
- ▶ Liquid forms of this medication must be measured carefully and concentrated solutions must be diluted before using. Your veterinarian or pharmacist will instruct you how to do this if necessary.
- ▶ Potassium supplements can have an unpleasant taste so 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?

- ▶ 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. 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 leftover medication for future use or give it to others to use.

What other information is important for this medication?

- ▶ Regular laboratory tests are needed to be sure that your animal's potassium level is not too low or too high. Do not miss these important recheck appointments.
- ▶ 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.