

Acetaminophen & Acetaminophen with Codeine

(ah-seet-a-min-a-fen); (koe-deen)

Description:

Oral Pain & Fever Reducing Agent

Other Names for this Medication: Tylenol®,
APAP, Paracetamol

Common Dosage Forms:

Veterinary: None. **Human:** Acetaminophen: 325 mg & 500 mg tablets, caplets, capsules, chewable tablets, oral liquids, and rectal suppositories. Acetaminophen/Codeine: 300 mg/15 mg (Tylenol® #2), 300 mg/30 mg (Tylenol® #3); 300 mg/60 mg tablets (Tylenol® #4); an oral liquid is also available.

This information sheet does not contain all available information for this medication and has not been reviewed by FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine. This sheet can help answer commonly asked questions but is not a substitute for medical advice. If you have other questions or need more information about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.

Key Information

- Must **NEVER** be used in **cats**.
- Not commonly used as an anti-inflammatory medication in dogs. Often prescribed in combination with codeine for pain relief. Contact your veterinarian immediately if you notice any adverse effects (eg, poor appetite, whites of the eyes, skin, or gums become yellow-colored [jaundice], persistent vomiting, diarrhea, blood in the vomit [looks like coffee grounds] or stool [black, tarry]).
- Give this medication exactly as your veterinarian prescribes, and do NOT give with other pain or fever-reducing medicines unless instructed by your veterinarian.
- May be given with or without food. If your animal 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.
- Acetaminophen with codeine is a controlled substance in the U.S. It is against federal law to use, give away, or sell this medication to others than for whom it was prescribed.

How is this medication useful?

Acetaminophen is a pain reliever and fever reducer that may be useful in dogs or small mammals when other pain relievers cause harm to the stomach or kidneys. Acetaminophen is not often used in animals. In dogs, it is usually prescribed in combination with codeine, a narcotic pain reliever (eg, Tylenol #3). 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 for 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 acetaminophen or codeine, 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.

How long until I will know if this medication is working, and how long will the effects of this medication last?

This medication should help your animal feel better within 1 to 2 hours. Your animal's clinical signs should improve after that time.

The effects of this medication are short-lived, meaning they will stop working within 24 hours, although the benefits may be prolonged if your animal has decreased kidney and/or liver function.

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:

- **CATS: Acetaminophen-containing products must NEVER be used in cats, as death may result!** Very small doses of acetaminophen (1/8 of a regular strength Tylenol® tablet) can kill an adult cat.
- Hedgehogs or sugar gliders: It is not known if acetaminophen is safe to use in these species.
- Any animal without a veterinarian's advice. Acetaminophen is not overly toxic to dogs, but it is not as safe to use in dogs as it is in humans.
- Animals receiving other pain relievers or fever reducers unless instructed by your veterinarian.
- Animals that are allergic to it.

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

- With liver problems.
- With intestinal problems. Acetaminophen with codeine can cause constipation.
- With severe kidney disease, breathing problems, Addison's disease (low stress hormone levels), low thyroid hormone levels, and those that are old, or in a poor state of health.

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?

Common but not serious side effects of acetaminophen with codeine include:

- Sleepiness, constipation, reduced appetite, vomiting, or diarrhea.

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.
- Yellowing of the whites of the eyes, skin, or gums (jaundice).
- Vomiting or diarrhea that persists or worsens.
- Blood in vomit (looks like coffee grounds) or in stools (black, tarry).

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?

Overdoses of acetaminophen (with or without codeine) in dogs can be serious; small amounts of acetaminophen eaten by cats can be fatal. If you witness or suspect an overdose, immediately 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.

- May be given with or without food. 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.
- 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, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist for tips to help 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, then wait the regular 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 (ie, pill minder) container at room temperature and out of direct sunlight.
- 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 animals?

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?

- Dogs have a higher normal body temperature (ie, 99.5°F-102.5°F; 37.5°C-39.2°C) than humans. These temperatures are not considered a fever in dogs and should not be treated with fever lowering medications.
- Acetaminophen products containing codeine are controlled prescription drugs in the U.S. It is a federal offense to give or sell this medication to others than for whom it was prescribed.
- 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 about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.