

## Ampicillin

(am-pi-sill-in)

### Description:

Aminopenicillin Antibiotic

**Other Names for this Medication:** Omnipen®,  
Princillin®

### Common Dosage Forms:

**Veterinary:** Ampicillin trihydrate 10 g and 25 g Injection Powder for Suspension. **Human:** 250 mg & 500 mg capsules; 125 mg/5 mL (25 mg/mL) and 250 mg/5 mL (50 mg/mL) powder for oral suspension.

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

- Ampicillin is absorbed into the body best when given without food.
- Gastrointestinal side effects are possible, including diarrhea, vomiting, and loss of appetite.
- Injectable solutions may cause stinging when injected under the skin.
- Do not give by mouth to rabbits, guinea pigs, chinchillas, hamsters, rodents, or other small mammals (any “pocket pets”), as life-threatening diarrhea may occur.
- Complete the entire course of antibiotics prescribed by your veterinarian even if your animal appears well.

### How is this medication useful?

In dogs and cats, ampicillin can be useful to help treat infections of the skin, respiratory tract, and urinary tract. The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved some dosage forms of this drug for use in animals. The FDA allows veterinarians to prescribe and use 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 ampicillin, 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 start having effects within 1 to 2 hours; however, you will not see the effects of this medication outwardly. Your animal should begin feeling better within 1 to 2 days. 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:

- Animals that are allergic to it or drugs like it (eg, other penicillins).
- Rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, chinchillas, rodents, and other pocket pets as ampicillin may cause fatal gastrointestinal conditions when given orally (by mouth) to these animals.

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 include:***

- Diarrhea, vomiting, and loss of appetite.
- Stinging at the injection site.

You don't have to be overly concerned if you see any of these side effects 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:***

- Complete loss of appetite in cats can sometimes cause severe liver problems, so contact your veterinarian if your cat completely stops eating.
- Fever, rashes, trouble breathing, or pale gums may indicate an allergic reaction to the drug.

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 ampicillin may only cause vomiting; however, larger overdoses can be serious and result in damage to the nervous system and liver. 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: **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center** (888-426-4435) and **Pet Poison HELPLINE** (855-764-7661); 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.

##### ***By mouth:***

- Ampicillin should be given without food, but if your animal vomits or acts sick after getting it on an empty stomach, give with a small amount of food or small treat to see if this helps. If vomiting continues, contact your veterinarian.
- Liquid forms of this medication must be measured carefully, stored in the refrigerator, and shaken well before giving. Your veterinarian or pharmacist can help by providing special measuring spoons or syringes. Liquid forms of this drug should be discarded 14 days after mixing.

##### ***By Injection:***

- Your veterinarian will mix the ampicillin trihydrate (Polyflex®) suspension (liquid) for injection, as it is stable for long periods of time after reconstituted (3 months at room temperature, 12 months in the refrigerator.)
- Shake ampicillin trihydrate (Polyflex®) suspensions well before each injection. Injections must only be given under the skin (subcutaneously) and not in a vein.
- Because this drug must be injected, be sure you understand the proper dosage, location(s), and method for giving the shots.

Your veterinarian or pharmacist will give you all of the items you need to give the shots (needles, syringes, alcohol swabs). If the medicine needs to be mixed before you give it, mix it exactly as your veterinarian or pharmacist instructs you.

Use a new needle and syringe to give each shot. Do not reuse needles and syringes.

It is important to equalize the pressure in a vial of ampicillin when adding diluent. Your pharmacist or veterinarian will show you how to add diluent in a way that does not cause the ampicillin to spray back out of the vial.

- Ampicillin sodium shots may sting when given under the skin.
- 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 the 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. 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 dosing, 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 vial. Ampicillin capsules should be stored at room temperature.
- Liquid forms (both oral suspensions and injectable solutions) must be stored in the refrigerator.
- Sometimes veterinarians prefer to use solutions of ampicillin sodium for injection (clear) instead of ampicillin trihydrate suspensions (cloudy, milky). Ampicillin sodium solutions (clear) break down quickly if not mixed exactly as instructed and stored in the refrigerator. Once mixed, the expiration date varies (from 1 hour to 72 hours). Do not use any mixed ampicillin after this expiration date.
- 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?**

- If giving these shots at home, place used needles and syringes in a sharps disposal container immediately after use. 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  $\frac{3}{4}$  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.
- 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.**