

Doxycycline

(docks-ee-sye-kleen)

Description:

Tetracycline Antibiotic

Other Names for this Medication: Vibramycin®

Common Dosage Forms:

Veterinary: None. **Human:** 20 mg, 40 mg, 50 mg, 60 mg, 75 mg, 80 mg, 100 mg, 120 mg, & 150 mg tablets and capsules; 10 mg/mL & 25 mg/mL oral suspension & oral syrup.

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

- Do not give as a dry pill or capsule. Give with a moist treat or small amount of liquid to be sure the medication reaches the stomach; this is especially important for cats. Doxycycline can cause ulcers in the throat and esophagus if it gets stuck before it reaches the stomach. If your animal has trouble swallowing or eating, contact your veterinarian immediately.
 - May upset stomach. Give with a small amount of food that does not contain iron or dairy products.
 - Do not give multivitamins, calcium supplements, antacids, or laxatives within 2 hours before or after giving doxycycline as these products reduce the drug's effectiveness.
 - This drug may make your animal's skin more sensitive to sunlight and increase the risk for sunburn on hairless areas (eg, nose, around the eyelids and ears). Tell your veterinarian if you notice any reddening or sun burning of the skin.

How is this medication useful?

Doxycycline, given by mouth, can be useful in dogs, cats, horses, small mammals, birds, and reptiles to treat infections including Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, *Chlamydia* spp infection, Psittacosis, and heartworm infection. This medication can also be used to reduce inflammation such as eye inflammation in horses. 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 (except as a dental gel to be administered by your veterinarian during dental procedures). The FDA allows veterinarians to prescribe products containing this drug in different species or for other conditions in certain situations.

A veterinarian-applied gel product is available for treating periodontal disease in dogs.

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 medication, so tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including vitamins, supplements, herbal therapies, antacids, and laxatives) you are giving your animal, as well as the amount and schedule of each.
- Tell your veterinarian about any conditions or diseases your animal may have now or has had in the past such as liver or kidney disease.
 - 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 may 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 patients:
- That are allergic to it or other tetracycline drugs.
- That are pregnant or nursing unless the benefits to the mother outweigh the risks to the offspring.

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

- That have liver problems.
- That are young and still developing bones and teeth.

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?

Side effects that usually are not serious include:

- Stomach upset, vomiting (in small animals), reduced appetite. If any of these occur, try giving the dose with a small amount of food to see if it helps.
- Diarrhea.
- Reddening (sunburn) of hairless skin around nose, eyelids, and ears when exposed to sunlight.

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:

- Marked decrease in energy level (tiredness, weakness), evidence of a fever, vomiting and diarrhea (especially if blood is present), lack of appetite, yellowing of eyes, skin, or gums (jaundice), tender or painful abdomen (stomach), bleeding, seizures (convulsions), or changes in behavior.
- Loss of appetite, vomiting, regurgitation (especially after eating when doxycycline has not been given), or trouble swallowing may mean that damage to the throat or esophagus has occurred from the tablet or capsule getting stuck on the way to the stomach.

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?

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: **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.

- In small animals, doxycycline can be given with or without food, but avoid giving it at the same time with dairy products (eg, milk, cheese). To help prevent damage to the throat or esophagus (if the tablet or capsule gets stuck before it reaches the stomach), do not give as a dry pill. Give with a moist treat or small amount of liquid to ensure that the tablet or capsule reaches the stomach. Buttering a cat's lips can cause salivation, which helps the drug pass to the stomach. If your animal has trouble swallowing or eating, or if vomiting or regurgitation occurs after eating, contact your veterinarian immediately.
- Milk or other dairy products, calcium, oral antacids, iron, or bismuth subsalicylate (eg, Pepto-Bismol®) must be separated from doxycycline doses by at least 2 hours.
- When giving orally (by mouth) to horses, doxycycline is absorbed best when food has been withheld for a few hours before a dose.
- 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 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, away from heat and protected from light.
- The oral suspension, once mixed, should be stored at room temperature and is stable for 14 days after mixing. Throw out any remaining suspension after 14 days.
- 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?

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.