

Famotidine

(fa-moe-ti-deen)

Description:

Antacid (Histamine-2 blocker)

Other Names for this Medication: Pepcid®

Common Dosage Forms:

Veterinary: None. **Human:** 10 mg, 20 mg, & 40 mg oral tablets (plain, film-coated, chewable, & orally disintegrating) & gelcaps; powder for oral suspension: 40 mg/5 mL (8 mg/mL) when reconstituted.

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

- Used to treat or prevent stomach ulcers.
- Doses often are given 1-2 times per day.
- Works best if given before the first meal of the day. 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.
- Famotidine is available over the counter (OTC) without a prescription, but only give it to your animal if your veterinarian recommends it.

How is this medication useful?

Famotidine is a medication that is used to prevent and treat stomach ulcers; it works by reducing the amount of acid in the stomach.

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 famotidine so tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including vitamins, supplements, herbal therapies, and treats) you are giving your animal, including 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.
- 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, may become pregnant or is 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 veterinarian may need to run further tests to determine if the medication is working appropriately. 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 have had an allergic reaction to it or similar drugs (eg, ranitidine) in the past.

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

- Older animals.
- Animals with liver or kidney problems.
- Animals with heart disease.

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?

Famotidine is generally tolerated well by both dogs and cats, but in some animals it may cause:

- Vomiting, diarrhea.
- Decreased or loss of appetite.
- Dry mouth or skin.

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.

If my animal gets too much of this medication (an overdose), what should I do?

Overdoses of famotidine are not usually serious, but if you know or think your animal got too much of this medication and they are showing adverse effects, 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.

- Do not cut or break tablets unless instructed to by your veterinarian or pharmacist. It's a good idea to always check the prescription label to be sure you are giving the drug correctly.
- Famotidine should be given about 30 minutes before a meal, typically for the first meal of the day. If your animal vomits or acts sick after getting it on an empty stomach, give it with the meal instead. 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, wait and give the next dose when it is usually time to do so. Do not double-up doses or give an extra dose.

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, out of direct sunlight.
- Liquids should be stored exactly as recommended and discarded by the date shown on the prescription bottle.
- 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?

- Do not give famotidine (or any other medications) to your animal without first consulting a veterinarian.
- Do not change or switch dosage forms (eg, brand names, tablets to liquid) without first consulting with a veterinarian or pharmacist, as the amount of drug absorbed may differ from one form to another.
- Use of this drug may not be allowed in certain animal competitions. Please 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.