

## Lactulose

(*lak-tyoo-lows*)

### Description:

Ammonia Reducer; Laxative (Anti-Constipation)

**Other Names for this Medication:** Cephulac®,  
Kristalose®

### Common Dosage Forms:

**Veterinary:** None. **Human:** Lactulose solution for oral or rectal use: 10 gm /15 mL; lactulose crystals for oral solution: 10 gm & 20 gm packets.

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

- Most commonly used to treat constipation and reduce ammonia levels in birds and other small animals.
- Lactulose is generally well tolerated, especially after it has been used for awhile.
- Contact your veterinarian if your animal develops diarrhea.
- When lactulose is prescribed for patients with liver disease, contact your veterinarian if signs of liver disease worsen or if fewer than 2-3 soft stools are produced per day.

### How is this medication useful?

Lactulose is used to treat constipation and reduce ammonia blood levels in patients with liver disease. It can also be used as a stool softener to treat constipation in small animals. 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 lactulose 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 lactulose, 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 may have 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 days. 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.

#### **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.

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

- Have diabetes.
- Have pre-existing fluid or electrolyte abnormalities.
- Are not well hydrated or that are prone to dehydration.

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?**

*Side effects, which are not usually serious, include:*

- Diarrhea (most common side effect).
- Flatulence (excess gas), stomach distention (bloating), and stomach cramping. These are common when starting lactulose therapy but usually get better over time.

You don't have to be overly concerned if you see any of these signs unless they are severe, are persistent, or worsen. Contact your veterinarian if this happens.

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

Overdoses of lactulose can cause diarrhea and dehydration. 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.

- Cats dislike the taste of lactulose syrup, so giving it to them can be difficult. Lactulose crystals can be mixed with food and may make it easier to give the medication to cats.
- 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 to reduce the stress of medication time.
- Continue giving this medication as long as the label says or until your veterinarian has told you to stop giving it. If you want to stop before then, talk to your veterinarian as there may be important reasons to continue giving it.
- Some cats with a condition called megacolon may need to receive lactulose for most of their lives.

#### **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 its original prescription bottle at room temperature.
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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?**

- Be sure your animal has plenty of clean water to drink to prevent dehydration.
- 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.**