

Meloxicam

(mel-ox-i-kam)

Description:

Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drug (NSAID)

Other Names for this Medication: Metacam®

Common Dosage Forms:

Veterinary: 0.5 mg/mL (0.02 mg per drop) & 1.5 mg/mL (0.05 mg per drop) oral suspension. Injectable forms for dogs and cats are available for veterinarian use only. **Human:** 7.5 mg & 15 mg tablets; 7.5 mg/5 mL (1.5 mg/mL) 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

- Give this medicine with food; depending on size of the animal, the drug can be given either on top of food or directly into the mouth
 - Ongoing (more than one dose) use of meloxicam in **cats** is controversial and it must be used cautiously, if at all.
 - Most animals tolerate this drug well; some will rarely develop ulcers or serious liver and kidney problems (especially cats). Watch for: eating less than normal; vomiting; changes in bowel movements; changes in behavior or activity (less active than normal); weakness (stumbling, clumsiness); seizures (convulsions); aggression (threatening behavior and actions); yellowing of gums, skin, or whites of the eyes (jaundice); changes in drinking (frequency, amount consumed) or urination habits (frequency, color, or smell).
- Store honey-flavored suspension well out of reach of animals and children.
- Periodic blood tests to check for liver and kidney side effects are required. Do not miss these important follow-up visits.

How is this medication useful?

Oral meloxicam suspension is used in animals to control pain and inflammation. The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved oral meloxicam suspension for use in dogs for the control of pain and inflammation associated with osteoarthritis. 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 this drug, 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 moderate in duration, meaning they may last for a few days, 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 severely allergic to other drugs like it (eg, NSAIDs, aspirin).
- That have bloody stools or bloody vomit.
- That have a pre-existing kidney or liver condition.
- That have any condition predisposing them to dehydration.
- That are anorexic (loss of appetite).
- Animals that are taking other NSAIDs (eg, carprofen, etodolac, firocoxib, deracoxib), aspirin, or corticosteroids (eg, prednisone, methylprednisolone, dexamethasone), as there is a greater chance of adverse effects occurring.

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

- Cats. The manufacturers' labels (US) state: "Warning: Repeated use of meloxicam in cats has been associated with acute renal failure and death. Do not administer additional injectable or oral meloxicam to cats." However, in some other countries (eg, UK), oral meloxicam is labeled for ongoing use in cats.
- Dogs younger than 6 months of age.
- Animals that have stomach or gastrointestinal ulcers or have had them in the past. Meloxicam may make these ulcers worse or come back.
- Animals that are on diuretic treatment (eg, furosemide, hydrochlorothiazide).
- Animals that have pre-existing heart problems.
- Animals that are pregnant, lactating or are breeding animals. It is not known if meloxicam is safe to use in these animals.
- That have a bleeding disorder (eg, von Willebrand disease).
- That are old, weak, or frail.

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?

Meloxicam is tolerated well in most animals, but rarely, serious side effects (eg, stomach ulcers, liver or kidney problems) and sometimes death have been reported.

Side effects that may be serious or indicate a serious problem:

- Decrease in appetite (eating less than normal), vomiting, changes in bowel movements (such as diarrhea, or black, tarry or bloody stools).
- Changes in behavior or activity (less active than normal), incoordination, weakness (eg, stumbling, clumsiness), seizures (convulsions), or aggression (threatening behavior and actions).
- Yellowing of gums, skin, or whites of the eyes (jaundice).
- Changes in drinking (frequency, amount consumed) or urination habits (frequency, color, or smell). Cats are more likely to develop serious kidney problems than dogs when the drug is used on an ongoing basis.
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Changes in skin (eg, redness, scabs, scratching).

If you see any of these signs, stop giving the medicine, and 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: **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.

- There are two separate strengths of the oral suspension, 0.5 mg/mL and 1.5 mg/mL. Do **NOT** switch between them, as one is 3 times more concentrated than the other. Always use the correct oral syringe or dropper that comes with the medication.
- Oral meloxicam should be given with food or put directly on food.

Dogs weighing less than 10 pounds (4.5 kg):

- Shake well before use, then remove cap. Particular care should be given with regard to the accuracy of dosing.
- To prevent accidental overdosing of small dogs, **administer drops on food only**, never directly into the mouth.
- Carefully measure the oral suspension onto food to assure that the correct dose is given before feeding the dog. The syringe provided with the meloxicam concentration of 1.5 mg/mL cannot be used to measure doses for dogs weighing less than 5 pounds (2.3 kg).
- *For dogs weighing less than 5 pounds (2.3 kg)*, the oral suspension can be given using the dropper bottle. Your veterinarian will tell you how many drops to use to drop directly onto the food.
- *For dogs weighing between 5-10 pounds (2.25-4.5 kg)*, meloxicam oral suspension can be given by drops or using the measuring syringe provided in the package (see images below).
- The syringe fits onto the bottle and has a scale beginning at 5 pounds. When using the syringe, the dog's weight should be rounded **down** to the nearest 5-pound increment. Replace and tighten cap after use.

Dogs weighing over 10 pounds (4.5 kg):

- With the cap still on, shake well before each use. The oral suspension may **be either mixed with food or placed directly into the mouth**. Particular care should be given with regard to the accuracy of dosing. The oral suspension can be given using the measuring syringe provided in the package (see dosing procedure below). The syringe fits on to the bottle and has a scale in pounds designed to deliver the daily maintenance dose. When using the syringe, the dog's weight should be rounded **down** to the nearest 5-pound increment. Alternatively, the oral suspension can be given using the dropper bottle. Follow your veterinarian's directions on the label. Replace and tighten cap after use.
- Shake the bottle well before using. Attach the dosing syringe to the bottle by gently pushing the end on the top of the bottle.
- Turn the bottle/syringe upside down. Pull the plunger out until the black line on the plunger corresponds to the dog's body weight in pounds.
- Turn the bottle right way up and with a twisting movement separate the dosing syringe from the bottle.
- Push the plunger to empty the contents of the syringe.

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 closer than 12 hours before the next scheduled dose, either 1) skip the dose you missed and give it at the next scheduled time and go back to the regular dosing schedule, or 2) wait the amount of time between doses recommended by your veterinarian before giving another dose and give it regularly at that new time. 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 and protected from light.
- If your veterinarian or pharmacist has made (compounded) a special formulation for your animal, follow the storage recommendations and expiration date for the product.
- The oral suspension is honey-flavored and may be appealing to children or animals. Keep it securely stored.

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?

- When doses are listed in “drops”, use with caution, as drug concentration per drop may be different in products marketed in various countries.
- Meloxicam can stay in the body for several days after it is stopped. Do not give other NSAID drugs (eg, carprofen, deracoxib) or glucocorticoids (eg, prednisone, dexamethasone) for 5-7 days after stopping meloxicam, or until your veterinarian tells you to start.
- For the safety of your animal, your veterinarian will need to do periodic blood tests while on meloxicam. Do not miss these important follow-up visits.
- 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.