

Ondansetron

(on-dan-sah-tron)

Description:

Antiemetic

Other Names for this Medication: Zofran®

Common Dosage Forms:

Veterinary: None. **Human:** Tablets: 4 mg, 8 mg, 16 mg, & 24 mg; Orally disintegrating tablets: 4 mg & 8 mg; Oral Liquid: 4 mg/5 mL (0.8 mg/mL). A compounded topical gel may be available.

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 and/or prevent severe vomiting. May give oral products with or without food.
- Usually tolerated well. See side effects for more information.
- If using compounded topical gel, wear gloves when applying.
- If using orally disintegrating tablets, protect the tablets from moisture and be sure hands are dry whenever handling them.

How is this medication useful?

Ondansetron is used to treat and/or prevent severe vomiting in dogs and cats. 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 medications can interact with ondansetron, 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 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.

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

- Dog breeds that may have a certain mutation (*MDR1*) until they are tested for this mutation. This mutation is most commonly found in “white feet” breeds, including collies, Australian shepherd dogs, shelties, and long-haired whippets. Dogs that have this mutation may be overly sensitive to the drug, which can result in toxicity.
- Animals with liver disease.
- Animals with gastrointestinal blockage.
- Animals with certain heart rhythm abnormalities.

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 that usually are not serious include:

- Constipation, sedation (sleepiness), or head shaking.

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:

- Heart rhythm problems or low blood pressure (both are rare). If your animal collapses, faints, or has no energy, 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.

- The drug may be given either with food or on an empty stomach. If your animal vomits or acts sick after getting the medication on an empty stomach, try giving it with a little bit of food to see if this helps. 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 are using the orally disintegrating tablets, be sure your hands are completely dry before handling the tablets. These tablets will dissolve in your animal’s mouth and be swallowed with their saliva.
- If your veterinarian prescribes a compounded topical gel form of ondansetron, wear gloves when applying it to your animal.
- 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 and protected from light.
- Protect the orally disintegrating tablets from moisture.
- 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.