

# Chlorothiazide

(klor-oh-thye-a-zide)

**Category:** Diuretic

**Other Names for this Medication:** Diuril®

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** None. **Human:** 250 mg & 500 mg tablets; 250 mg/5 mL (50 mg/mL) oral suspension.

This information sheet does not contain all available information for this medication. It is to help answer commonly asked questions and help you give the medication safely and effectively to your animal. If you have other questions or need more information about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.

## Key Information

- ▶ When beginning this medicine, your animal may urinate more often than normal.
- ▶ May be given with or without food. If your pet 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. Allow access to fresh, clean water at all times and encourage normal food intake.
- ▶ Because this drug can change electrolytes (salts) in the blood, your veterinarian will want to do more frequent blood testing on your animal. Do not miss these important follow-up visits.
- ▶ Contact your veterinarian immediately if excessive thirst, weakness, collapse (passing out), head tilt, lack of urination, or a racing heartbeat is noticed.

## How is this medication useful?

Chlorothiazide is used in small animals to treat high blood pressure and a rare condition called nephrogenic diabetes insipidus (not diabetes mellitus or sugar diabetes).

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 cause problems when taken with chlorothiazide, so be sure to tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including vitamins, supplements, or herbal therapies) you are giving your animal, as well as the amount and schedule of each.
- ▶ Tell your veterinarian about any conditions or diseases your pet may have now or has had in the past.
- ▶ Chlorothiazide is relatively safe to use in pregnant animals, but it is generally not recommended to use it in nursing mothers as it can reduce milk production. 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 pet has developed 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.

## 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 cannot produce urine.
- ▶ That have had an allergic or severe reaction to it or other drugs in the same class (eg, hydrochlorothiazide).

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

- ▶ With severe kidney or liver disease.
- ▶ With diabetes mellitus or other conditions where body water, blood sugar, or electrolytes (salts) are out of balance.
- ▶ That are allergic to sulfa drugs; chlorothiazide is related to sulfas and could cause an allergic reaction.
- ▶ That are vomiting or have diarrhea.

If your animal matches any of these conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the possible risks of using the drug versus the benefits.

## What are the side effects of this medication?

### Common but not serious side effects include:

- ▶ Increased need to urinate. The greater need to urinate may cause some animals to act restless. Be sure to allow your animal the chance to urinate more often, especially when starting this drug or when doses are increased.
- ▶ Vomiting or diarrhea is possible.

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:

- ▶ Excessive thirst, weakness, collapse (passing out), lack of urination, or a racing heartbeat.
- ▶ Pale gums. Rarely, bumetanide causes anemia or other problems with blood.

If you see any of these signs, contact your veterinarian immediately.

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

Overdoses of chlorothiazide can be serious as they can lead to dehydration, low blood pressure, electrolyte (salt) imbalances, coma, and seizures. If you witness or suspect an overdose of chlorothiazide in your animal, 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.

- ▶ Unless your veterinarian tells you differently, make sure that your animal has plenty of food and clean drinking water available while on chlorothiazide therapy.
- ▶ May be given with or without food. If your pet 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.
- ▶ When beginning this medication, your animal may urinate more often than normal. If you are giving this medication more than once per day, try to avoid giving the last dose of the day within a few hours of bedtime to reduce the need to get up to allow your animal to urinate. Your veterinarian can suggest the best times to give this drug to avoid this problem.
- ▶ 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, 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?**

- ▶ Chlorothiazide tablets or oral suspension should be stored at room temperature in the original prescription bottle or an approved dosage reminder container (ie, pill minder) that is child- and light-resistant. Protect the oral liquid suspension from freezing.
- ▶ If your veterinarian or pharmacist has made (compounded) a special formulation for your animal, follow the noted 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 pets?**

There are no specific precautions required when handling this medication unless you are allergic to it. Wash your hands after handling any medication. People who are severely allergic to sulfa medications should wear disposable gloves when handling chlorothiazide tablets.

### **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.
- ▶ The use of chlorothiazide in performance horses is regulated state by state. Check with your state authorities prior to using chlorothiazide in a performance or competition.
- ▶ Your veterinarian will need to monitor your animal with examinations and bloodwork checks. Do not miss these important follow-up visits.

### **If you have any other questions or concerns about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.**