

# Cimetidine

(sey-met-i-deen)

**Category:** Stomach Acid Reducer (Histamine-2 blocker)

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

**Common Dosage Forms:** **Veterinary:** None. **Human:** 200 mg, 300 mg, 400 mg, & 800 mg oral tablets; 300 mg/5 mL (60 mg/mL) oral liquid.

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

- ▶ Used to treat or prevent stomach ulcers.
- ▶ Usually given 30 minutes before a meal. 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.
- ▶ Medicine often needs to be given 2 to 4 times per day.
- ▶ Cimetidine interacts with many other medications.
- ▶ Cimetidine is available OTC (over-the-counter; without a prescription), but only give it to your animal if your veterinarian recommends it.

## How is this medication useful?

Cimetidine is a medication used to prevent and/or treat stomach ulcers.

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.

- ▶ Many drugs can cause problems when taken with cimetidine. Tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including vitamins, supplements, herbal therapies, & treats) you are giving your animal, including the amount and time you give each.
- ▶ Tell your veterinarian about any conditions or diseases your pet may have now or has had in the past.
- ▶ 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 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 have had an allergic (hypersensitive) or severe reaction to it or similar drugs in the past.

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

- ▶ Older (geriatric) animals.
- ▶ Animals with reduced liver or kidney function.

If your pet has any of these conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks versus benefits.

## What are the side effects of this medication?

Cimetidine is generally well tolerated by both dogs and cats.

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

Overdoses of cimetidine are usually not serious, but large overdoses can cause serious toxicity (to the heart and lungs). If you know or think your animal has gotten too much of this medication, 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. Do not cut or break tablets unless instructed to by your veterinarian or pharmacist. It is a good idea to always check the prescription label to be sure you are giving the drug correctly.

- ▶ Cimetidine should be given about 30 minutes before a meal, usually 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.
- ▶ Cats do not like the taste of cimetidine liquid and will drool excessively after this medication is given. You can ask your pharmacist or veterinarian about compounding capsules or specially flavored liquids that will make it easier to get your cat to take cimetidine.
- ▶ 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, and then go back to the regular dosing schedule. 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. Keep away from children and other animals.
- ▶ Liquids should be stored exactly as recommended and discarded by the date shown on the prescription bottle.

**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..

**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?**

- ▶ Cimetidine is available OTC (over-the-counter; without a prescription). Do not give cimetidine (or any other OTC medications) to your animal without first consulting a veterinarian. Do not change dosage forms (eg, tablets to liquid) without first consulting with a veterinarian or pharmacist, as the dose may not be the same.
- ▶ Use of this drug may not be allowed in certain animal competitions. Check the rules for your animal's sport before entering it in a competition while you are giving it this medication.

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