

Fludrocortisone

(flue-droe-kor-ti-sone)

Category: Mineralocorticoid

Other Names for this Medication: Florinef®

Common Dosage Forms: **Veterinary:** None. **Human:** Tablets: 0.1 mg.

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

- ▶ May give with or without food. 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.
- ▶ Side effects unlikely, but if dose is too high for a long period of time, “Cushingoid” effects (eg, increased thirst and need to urinate, swelling, weight gain, pot belly) could occur; if dose is too low, “Addisonian” effects (eg, weakness, tiredness, vomiting, diarrhea) could occur.
- ▶ Surgery or stress (eg, trauma, illness) may require additional glucocorticoids (eg, methylprednisolone).
- ▶ Do not stop this drug abruptly, as serious side effects could occur.

How is this medication useful?

Fludrocortisone is used to treat hypoadrenocorticism (Addison’s Disease) in dogs, cats, and ferrets.

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 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.

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 congestive heart failure, severe renal (kidney) disease, or edema (swelling caused by excess fluid in the body tissues).
- ▶ That are nursing. The drug can enter the milk and affect nursing offspring; consider using a milk replacer.

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:

- ▶ Vomiting or acting sick after a dose. If this occurs, give with food to see if it helps.

You do not have to be overly concerned if you see this sign unless it is severe, worsens, or continues to be a problem. Contact your veterinarian if this happens.

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

- ▶ Any of the following “Cushingoid” effects may mean the dose is too high: Greater thirst and need to urinate, swelling, weight gain, or pot belly.
- ▶ Any of the following “Addisonian” effects may mean the dose is too low (not enough mineralocorticoid): Weakness, tiredness, shaking, collapse (passing out), loss of appetite, weight loss, vomiting, diarrhea, slower heart rate, or painful abdomen.

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?

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 **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 is 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 receiving the drug on an empty stomach, try giving the next dose with food or a small treat. 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 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.
- ▶ Patients are usually on this medication for an extended period, often for the rest of their lives. Give this medication according to the label's instructions and obtain refills as needed. Before stopping this medication, talk to your veterinarian, as there may be important reasons to continue its use.
- ▶ Do not stop the drug abruptly or serious side effects could occur.

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.
- ▶ 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 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 left over medication for future use or give it to others to use.

What other information is important for this medication?

- ▶ Your veterinarian will need to do periodic blood tests to ensure the safety of your animal while fludrocortisone is being given. Do not miss these important follow-up visits.
- ▶ If you are seeing a different veterinarian than usual, be sure to tell him or her your dog is taking this drug. Animals that require surgery or are stressed from trauma or illness may require additional glucocorticoid drugs.
- ▶ Once your animal is controlled on fludrocortisone, your veterinarian may advise you to add salt to the diet to try to lower the daily dose of fludrocortisone. Do not add salt to your animal's food without your veterinarian's guidance.
- ▶ 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 or concerns about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.