

Fluoxetine

(floo-ox-e-teen)

Category: Selective Serotonin-Reuptake Inhibitor (SSRI); Behavior-modification Drug

Other Names for this Medication: Prozac®, Reconcile®

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: 8 mg, 16 mg, 32 mg, & 64 mg chewable flavored tablets. **Human:** 10 mg & 20 mg tablets; 10 mg, 20 mg, & 40 mg capsules; 4 mg/mL (20 mg/5mL) 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

- ▶ When used as a behavior treatment, fluoxetine usually works best in combination with behavior modification therapy.
- ▶ It may take several weeks before you and your veterinarian can decide if it is working as desired.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Most common side effects are drowsiness (sleepiness) and reduced appetite. Rare side effects that can be serious are seizures and aggression. Contact your veterinarian immediately if you see either of these effects.
- ▶ Overdoses can be very serious; keep out of the reach of animals and children.
- ▶ Tell your veterinarian if your animal wore a flea and tick collar in the past two weeks; do not use flea collars while your animal is on this medication.
- ▶ Do not stop this medication abruptly without veterinarian's guidance.

How is this medication useful?

Veterinarians may prescribe fluoxetine for treating behavior problems such as aggression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and anxiety in dogs, cats, and birds. It may also be useful in cats for inappropriate elimination.

The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for use in dogs for treating canine separation anxiety. The FDA does allow veterinarians to prescribe and use products containing this drug in other animal species 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 fluoxetine, 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.
- ▶ Some ingredients found in flea and tick collars can interact with fluoxetine, so let your veterinarian know if your animal wore one in the past two weeks or if you intend to have your animal to wear one while it receives this medication (not recommended).

- ▶ Tell your veterinarian about any conditions or diseases your pet 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 how well the treatment 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 pet 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:

- ▶ Animals that are allergic to it or drugs like it (eg, sertraline, paroxetine).
- ▶ Dogs with epilepsy or a history of seizures.
- ▶ Patients receiving other drugs that lower the seizure threshold (eg, phenothiazines such as acepromazine or chlorpromazine).
- ▶ Combination with a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) (eg, selegiline or amitraz), or within a minimum of 14 days of discontinuing therapy with an MAOI.

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

- ▶ That are aggressive.
- ▶ That are pregnant or nursing.
- ▶ With liver disease or diabetes.

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

What are the side effects of this medication?

Common, but not serious side effects include:

- ▶ Drowsiness, lack of energy.
- ▶ Reduced appetite, vomiting, diarrhea.
- ▶ Shaking, shivering, tremors, restlessness, or panting.
- ▶ Excessive vocalization, including whining.
- ▶ Cats: Irritability, sleep disturbances, reduced appetite, and changes in urination and defecation habits (eg, going more or less than normal, diarrhea, color).

You don't have to be overly concerned if you see any of these unless they persist or worsen. Contact your veterinarian if this happens.

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

- ▶ Seizures, convulsions.
- ▶ Aggression (threatening behavior or actions) or extreme hyperexcitability (over excited and won't settle down).

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

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

Overdoses of fluoxetine can cause seizures, dilated (large) pupils (black center of the eyes) and vomiting. 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's a good idea to always check the prescription label to be sure you are giving the drug correctly.

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ If you notice that your animal isn't interested in eating, try hand-feeding foods it really likes. Often this side effect doesn't last, but if it does, 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 dosing and reducing the stress of medication time.
- ▶ If you want to stop giving the medication before the prescription is completed, first contact your veterinarian. There may be an important reason to continue giving the medication until it's gone. Fluoxetine is usually tapered off slowly to reduce the chances of withdrawal symptoms (eg, vomiting, anxiety and shaking) occurring.

What should I do if I miss giving a dose of this medication?

If you miss a dose, give the medication 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 (ie, pill minder) container at room temperature. Keep away from children and other animals, in particular, with the flavored chewable tablets (Reconcile®).
- ▶ If your veterinarian or pharmacist has made (compounded) a special formulation for your animal, follow the storage recommendations and expiration date for the product.

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?

- ▶ When used as a behavior treatment, fluoxetine usually works best in combination with behavior modification therapy.
- ▶ It may take several weeks before you and your veterinarian can decide if it is working as desired.
- ▶ Fluoxetine stays in the body for several weeks and the manufacturer for the dog product recommends to wait 6 weeks after stopping fluoxetine before giving other drugs that possibly cause problems when taken with it. Don't start any new drug during this time period without first checking with your veterinarian or pharmacist.
- ▶ Aged cheeses may cause problems when given with fluoxetine; do not feed them to your animal while on 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 or concerns about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.