

Isotretinoin

(eye-so-tret-i-noyn)

Category: Retinoid

Other Names for this Medication: Accutane®, Claravis®, Amnesteem®, Sotret®

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: None. **Human:** Oral Capsules: 10 mg, 20 mg, 25 mg, 30 mg, 35 mg, & 40 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

- ▶ **Pregnant women must not be exposed to this drug;** severe birth defects can result. Use in households where pregnant women are present is not advised.
- ▶ Best given with foods high in fat. Give the same way (with food or without) each time.
- ▶ Dogs tolerate this medicine better than cats. Most common side effect in dogs is dry eye syndrome (KCS); in cats, gastrointestinal (GI) effects (eg, loss of appetite, diarrhea, weight loss) may limit use.

How is this medication useful?

Isotretinoin is used to treat a variety of serious skin diseases 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 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 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 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 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 patients:

- ▶ That are allergic to it or other retinoids.
- ▶ That are pregnant.
- ▶ Used for breeding (males).
- ▶ That are nursing young.

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

- ▶ In households with pregnant women or women who may become pregnant. The drug can cause serious birth defects.
- ▶ That have high levels of fats (ie, triglycerides) in the blood.
- ▶ With severe kidney or liver disease.

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?

Dogs: Isotretinoin is usually tolerated well in most dogs, but side effects include:

- ▶ Dry eyes (keratoconjunctivitis sicca, KCS). Watch for irritation, eye redness, or rubbing of eyes.
- ▶ Vomiting, reduced appetite, abdominal distention (swollen belly), diarrhea.
- ▶ Collapse (passing out).
- ▶ Behavior changes.
- ▶ Stiff limbs (walking abnormally).
- ▶ Itching or abnormal changes in skin.
- ▶ Reddened feet, corners of the eyes, lips, or mouth.
- ▶ Swollen tongue.
- ▶ Increased thirst and need to urinate.

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

Cats: Isotretinoin is not tolerated as well by cats. Side effects include:

- ▶ Lack of appetite with weight loss; diarrhea.
- ▶ Blepharospasm (abnormal blinking or shutting of eyelids) or crusting around the eyes.

If any of these signs become severe, worsen, or continue to be a problem, contact your veterinarian.

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's a good idea to always check the prescription label to be sure you are giving the drug correctly.

- ▶ This drug may be given either with food or on an empty stomach, but giving with food high in fat (eg, milk, cream, cheese) may allow more of the drug to be absorbed. Give it the same way (with or without food) each time you give it. 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 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.
- ▶ 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?

This drug has a very high risk for causing birth defects and in general it **should not be used in households where pregnant women are present**. If this is not possible, pregnant women **must not** handle or be exposed to this drug. Pregnant women must also avoid direct contact with the treated animal's saliva, urine, or feces.

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 or concerns about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.