

Methylphenidate

(meth-ill-fen-i-date)

Category: CNS Stimulant (behavior modifier)

Other Names for this Medication: Ritalin®, Methylin®, Metadate® ER, Concerta®, Daytrana®

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: None. **Human:** Methylphenidate comes in a wide variety of dosage forms and strengths.

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

- ▶ A common side effect is decreased appetite.
- ▶ If your animal wore a flea and tick collar in the past two weeks, let your veterinarian know. Do not use one of these collars on your animal while it's getting this medicine without first talking to your veterinarian.
- ▶ Contact your veterinarian immediately if your animal has a seizure while taking this medication.
- ▶ Methylphenidate has significant potential for abuse by humans and should be kept secure.

How is this medication useful?

Methylphenidate is a stimulant and behavior modifier. Veterinarians may prescribe it for treating cataplexy, narcolepsy, or hyperactivity in dogs.

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 methylphenidate, so be sure to tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including flea and tick collars, 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 have had a severe reaction to it or other drugs like it (eg, amphetamines).
- ▶ That are also taking a MAOI (monoamine oxidase inhibitor) or have stopped taking one in the last 14 days.

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

- ▶ With seizure disorders (eg, epilepsy).
- ▶ With heart disease or high blood pressure.
- ▶ That are aggressive.
- ▶ That are pregnant or nursing.

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?

Side effects that usually are not serious include:

- ▶ Decreased or loss of appetite (eating less or not at all).
- ▶ Hyperactivity/nervousness or insomnia (not sleeping).
- ▶ Faster heartbeat or breathing rate.
- ▶ Tremors.

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:

- ▶ Seizures (convulsions).
- ▶ Hyperthermia (high body temperature), often with exercise.
- ▶ Aggressiveness.

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 methylphenidate can cause hyperactivity, salivation, diarrhea, head bobbing, agitation (eg, nervousness, upset, unable to relax), fast heartbeat, tremors, seizures, and an elevated body temperature. 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: **Pet Poison HELPLINE** (855-764-7661) and **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center** (888-426-4435); 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.

- ▶ The drug may be given either with food or on an empty stomach. 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.
- ▶ Liquid forms of this medication must be measured carefully. Your veterinarian or pharmacist can help by providing special measuring spoons or syringes.
- ▶ If giving an extended-release form of this medication, do not crush it and spilt it only if your pharmacist says it is OK to do so.
- ▶ 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; a new written prescription is required each time this drug is refilled. 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. 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 and out of direct sunlight.
- ▶ 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. Some people abuse methylphenidate, so keep it secure.

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?

- ▶ Products containing methylphenidate are controlled prescription drugs in the US. It is against federal law to use, give away, or sell this medication to others than for whom it was prescribed. A new written prescription is required each time the drug is refilled.
- ▶ Like all behavioral treatments, methylphenidate usually works best in combination with behavior modification therapy.
- ▶ Flea and tick collars that contain amitraz (eg, Preventic®) may interact with methylphenidate; only use collars that your veterinarian recommends. If your animal wore one of these collars in the past two weeks, let your veterinarian know. Do not use one on your animal while it's getting this medicine without first talking to your veterinarian.
- ▶ 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.