

# Mineral Oil – Petrolatum

**Category:** Lubricant Laxative (Anti-Constipation)

**Other Names for this Medication:** Liquid Petrolatum®

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** Liquid mineral oil; various cat laxative products available in a variety of flavors. **Human:** Liquid mineral oil; large variety of over-the-counter products available.

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

- ▶ Most commonly used to treat constipation in cats, dogs, and horses.
- ▶ Mineral oil is generally well tolerated with few side effects.
- ▶ When given rectally, oil leakage may occur.
- ▶ Mineral oil and petrolatum are available over-the-counter (without a prescription). Do not give mineral oil or petrolatum (or any other over-the-counter medications) to your animal without first consulting your veterinarian.

## How is this medication useful?

Mineral oil (liquid petrolatum) is commonly used in horses to treat constipation and fecal impactions. Mineral oil can also be used to slow absorption after fat-soluble toxins have been eaten. Petrolatum-containing products are used to treat constipation in cats and dogs, and to prevent or reduce hair balls in cats. 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 mineral oil, 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 are pregnant or very ill.
- ▶ With swallowing problems, when being given by mouth.

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?

When used in small amounts, for short periods of time, there should be few side effects.

- ▶ Leakage of the oil may occur when used rectally.
- ▶ Lung problems. If oil forms are given by mouth, inhalation of the oil may occur which can damage the lungs. In animals, liquid mineral oil is usually not given by mouth. Contact your veterinarian immediately if this happens.

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

Overdoses of mineral oil can cause problems with the liver, spleen, and lymph nodes. 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 label to be sure you are giving the drug correctly.

- ▶ Liquid and gel 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.
- ▶ Continue giving this medication as the label says until your veterinarian has told you to stop giving it. If you want to stop before then, talk to your veterinarian as there may be important reasons to continue giving it.

## 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 its original prescription bottle at room temperature.
- ▶ 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, but it is always a good idea to 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?**

- ▶ Mineral oil and petrolatum are available over-the-counter (without a prescription). Do not give laxatives or any other over-the-counter medicines to your animal without first consulting a 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.
- ▶ Do not change dosage forms (eg, gel to liquid) without first consulting with a veterinarian or pharmacist, as the doses may not be the same.

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