

# Phenoxybenzamine

(fen-ox-ee-ben-zah-meen)

**Category:** Alpha-Adrenergic Blocker

**Other Names for this Medication:** Dibenzyline®

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** None. **Human:** 10 mg capsules. Phenoxybenzamine may also be made (compounded) into capsules, chewable treats, or liquid dosage forms.

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 be given with or without food.
- ▶ Can cause GI effects (eg, vomiting, diarrhea in dogs and cats; constipation in horses), rapid heartbeat, pinpoint or tiny pupils, and runny nose.
- ▶ If your animal faints or collapses, contact your veterinarian immediately.

## How is this medication useful?

Phenoxybenzamine can be used to 1) relax the bladder and urethra (tube that goes from the urinary bladder to outside of the body) muscles to prevent urine leakage caused when the bladder or urethra spasms, 2) reduce blood pressure in animals suffering from pheochromocytoma tumors, and 3) in horses, to treat or prevent lameness (laminitis/"founder") and to treat diarrhea.

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 in the US. 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 cause problems when taken with phenoxybenzamine, but they are rarely used in veterinary medicine. Be sure to tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including vitamins, supplements, or herbal therapies) you are giving your animal, as well as the amount and schedule of 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. High doses of phenoxybenzamine have caused heart birth defects in guinea pigs.
- ▶ 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:

- ▶ Horses with signs of colic.
- ▶ Animals with very low blood pressure or in shock.
- ▶ Animals that had an allergic reaction to this drug in the past.

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

- ▶ Animals with heart disease as it can cause a rapid heartbeat.
- ▶ Male animals used for breeding as it can cause a failure to ejaculate.
- ▶ Animals with kidney disease.

If your animal matches any of these conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the possible risks of using the drug versus the benefits it may have.

## What are the side effects of this medication?

### **Side effects that are usually not serious include:**

- ▶ Stuffy or runny nose, pinpoint or tiny pupils, fast heartbeat, and failure to ejaculate.
- ▶ Stomach upset and vomiting. It may cause constipation in horses and lead to colic.

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:**

- ▶ Fainting or being excessively tired, weak, or dizzy may be signs of low blood pressure.

Contact your veterinarian immediately if you see any of these signs.

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

Overdoses of phenoxybenzamine can be serious because they can cause dangerously low blood pressure. If you witness or suspect an overdose of phenoxybenzamine in your animal, 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.

- ▶ Phenoxybenzamine 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.
- ▶ Compounded 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.
- ▶ 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?**

- ▶ Phenoxybenzamine should be stored in child- and light-resistant, tight containers at room temperature. Keep away from children and other animals.
- ▶ If your veterinarian or pharmacist has made (compounded) a special formulation for your animal, follow the noted 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 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.**