

# Phenylbutazone (Horses)

(fen-ill-byoo-ta-zone)

**Category:** Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Agent (NSAID)

**Other Names for this Medication:** Butazolidin®, "Bute"

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** *Oral tablets:* 1 gram; *Oral Powder:* 1 gram in 10 grams of powder; *Oral Paste in Syringes:* containing 6 grams or 12 grams/syringe; *Injection:* 200 mg/mL. **Human:** None.

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 given by mouth, phenylbutazone should be given with food.
- ▶ When given as a shot, phenylbutazone must only be given in the vein (intravenous; IV).
- ▶ Do not use with other NSAIDs (eg, flunixin, firocoxib, aspirin).
- ▶ Side effects can include: Mouth and/or stomach ulcers, kidney damage, loss of appetite, swelling of the limbs (edema).

## How is this medication useful?

Phenylbutazone is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug used to treat pain and inflammation in horses.

The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for use in horses. The FDA does allow veterinarians to prescribe and use products containing this drug in different species or for other conditions in certain situations. In the past, approved phenylbutazone products were available for use in dogs, but newer NSAIDs (eg, carprofen, meloxicam) are safer to use. 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 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 horses:

- ▶ That are allergic to it.
- ▶ That are going to be used for human food.
- ▶ That have or have had a history of stomach ulcers.
- ▶ That are anemic or have bleeding disorders.
- ▶ Before soundness exams. Phenylbutazone may hide the signs of lameness. It is unethical to use this drug prior to exams.

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

- ▶ Foals or ponies, as they may be more likely to develop mouth and stomach ulcers or other adverse effects.
- ▶ Horses that have kidney problems.
- ▶ Pregnant or nursing horses.

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?

Phenylbutazone is tolerated well by most horses, but side effects have been reported. Rarely, serious side effects can occur without warning and, in some situations, have resulted in death.

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

- ▶ Sores, scabs, redness, or rubbing of the facial skin, particularly around the mouth.
- ▶ Sores or ulcers on the tongue and inside of mouth.
- ▶ Changes in eating or drinking habits (eating or drinking more or less than normal).
- ▶ Changes in urination habits (frequency, smell, color).
- ▶ Yellowing of gums, skin, or whites of the eyes (jaundice).
- ▶ Swelling of the limbs.
- ▶ Unexplained weight loss.
- ▶ Changes in behavior or activity levels (more or less active than normal).
- ▶ Colic, diarrhea.

If you see any of these signs, stop giving the drug and contact your veterinarian immediately.

## If my animal 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: **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.

- ▶ Phenylbutazone given by mouth works best when given with some food to help prevent stomach upset and mouth or stomach ulcers.
- ▶ Phenylbutazone injection must only be given in the vein (intravenously; IV), and this is usually done by your veterinarian. It must never be given under the skin (subcutaneously, SC) or in the muscle (intramuscularly, IM), or severe pain and tissue damage can occur. Seizures can occur if phenylbutazone is injected into an artery.
- ▶ 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 horse 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 oral forms of phenylbutazone in their original prescription containers at room temperature and protected from light.
- ▶ Phenylbutazone injection liquid should be stored in the refrigerator 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?

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?

- ▶ Phenylbutazone injection liquid should not be mixed with other drugs in the same syringe.
- ▶ Be sure fresh water is available for your horse at all times while on this medication; if your horse doesn't drink enough water, the drug can have worse effects on the kidneys.
- ▶ The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued an order banning the extra-label use (in a way that is not on the FDA-approved label) of phenylbutazone animal and human drugs in female dairy cattle 20 months of age or older.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Phenylbutazone can alter the results of laboratory tests. Let your veterinarian know if your horse is on phenylbutazone prior to having any laboratory tests performed.

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