

# Pimobendan

(pi-moe-ben-den)

**Category:** Inodilator

**Other Names for this Medication:** Vetmedin®, Heartmedin®, Acardi®

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** 1.25 mg, 2.5 mg, 5 mg, & 10 mg chewable tablets.

**Human:** None in the USA.

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

- ▶ This medication is best given on an empty stomach.
- ▶ GI effects (eg, poor appetite, diarrhea) are the most likely adverse effects, but if you see anything out of the ordinary, contact your veterinarian.
- ▶ Be sure to give exactly as prescribed.

## How is this medication useful?

The FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) has approved pimobendan for the treatment of heart failure in dogs caused by either a bad heart valve (myxomatous mitral valve disease–MMVD) or a weak heart muscle (dilated cardiomyopathy). This drug can help improve the heart's action by making the heart muscle pump harder and relaxing blood vessels to allow blood to flow easier. This drug may prove useful in cats with dilated cardiomyopathy, but it is currently not labeled for use in cats, and there is much less experience with it. 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. It is very important to discuss the following things with your veterinarian so together you can make the best decisions for treating your animal.

- ▶ Other drugs may cause problems when taken with pimobendan. 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 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 worked 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:

- ▶ With certain heart conditions (hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, aortic stenosis). Your veterinarian will determine if your animal has these conditions before using pimobendan.
- ▶ That have had an allergic reaction to it.

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

- ▶ With uncontrolled heart rhythm problems.
- ▶ Born with (congenital) heart defects.
- ▶ With diabetes or other serious diseases.
- ▶ That are pregnant or nursing.

If your animal matches any of these, 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?

Common, but not serious, side effects include:

- ▶ Gastrointestinal effects (eg, poor appetite, diarrhea).
- ▶ Lack of energy, weakness.

You don't have to be overly concerned if you see any of these 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:

- ▶ Racing or abnormal heartbeat.
- ▶ Collapsing or fainting.
- ▶ Excitation or behavior changes.
- ▶ Bleeding or bruising.
- ▶ Increased belly fluid (bloating).
- ▶ Trouble breathing or wheezing.
- ▶ Yellowing of the whites of the eyes and gums (jaundice).
- ▶ Rash or skin redness.

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

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

Overdoses of pimobendan may be serious. Fast heartbeats are commonly seen in dogs that get overdoses of pimobendan. 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.

- ▶ Pimobendan is best given on an empty stomach.
- ▶ 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, wait until the next scheduled dosing time and resume the normal twice-daily (every 12 hours) pattern of dosing. Do not double-up doses or give an extra dose.

### How should I store this medication?

- ▶ Store this medication in the original child and light resistant prescription bottle or an approved dosage reminder container (ie, pill minder) at room temperature.
- ▶ If your veterinarian or pharmacist has made (compounded) a special formulation for your animal, please 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 left over 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. Please 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.