

# Pseudoephedrine

(soo-doe-e-fed-rin)

**Category:** Sympathomimetic Agent

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

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** None. **Human:** 30 mg & 60 mg oral tablets or capsules; 120 mg & 240 mg extended-release tablets or capsules; 15 mg/5mL (3 mg/mL) & 30 mg/5 mL (6 mg/mL) oral liquid;

**(Note:** All pseudoephedrine products are “behind the counter” in the US and strict sales limits are enforced).

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

- ▶ Side effects include lack of appetite, restlessness (can't settle down), reduced energy, and rapid heartbeat.
- ▶ Overdoses can be serious; keep out of reach and give only as instructed.

## How is this medication useful?

Pseudoephedrine is a drug that is sometimes used to help treat urinary incontinence (dribbling) in dogs. It is sometimes tried as an oral decongestant or to treat retrograde ejaculation in animals.

Because pseudoephedrine can be used to make methamphetamine (a stimulant drug), its sale is restricted to “behind the counter” status in the US. 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 pseudoephedrine, 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 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.

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

- ▶ With irregular heartbeats, high blood pressure, or heart disease.
- ▶ With an enlarged prostate gland.
- ▶ With hyperthyroidism (too much thyroid hormone).
- ▶ With diabetes mellitus (ie, sugar diabetes).

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?

### Common, but not serious side effects include:

- ▶ A lack of appetite (eating less than normal), rapid heartbeat, and less energy.
- ▶ Higher levels of activity, restlessness, insomnia (trouble sleeping).
- ▶ Vomiting.

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:

- ▶ When doses are too high for a patient, they may develop seizures (convulsions), high blood pressure, higher body temperature, continued vomiting, or enlarged/big pupils.

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

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

Overdoses of pseudoephedrine can be very serious and in smaller animals only a few tablets or capsules above the regular dose can be toxic. If you witness or suspect an overdose, immediately 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.

- ▶ Pseudoephedrine may be given with or without food, but 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.
- ▶ Do not crush sustained-release tablets or capsules. Only split or divide sustained-release tablets or capsules if your veterinarian or pharmacist advises you to.

- ▶ 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 do not double-up doses. Once a dose has been given, wait the time recommended by your veterinarian before giving another 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. Keep the liquid forms of the drug from freezing. 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.**