

# Rifampin

(rif-am-pin)

**Category:** Antibiotic

**Other Names for this Medication:** Rifadin®, Rimactane®

**Common Dosage Forms:** **Veterinary:** None. **Human:** 150 mg & 300 mg capsules; 25 mg/mL oral suspension.

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

- ▶ Best given on an empty stomach, but if it causes stomach upset or vomiting, give with food to see if this helps.
- ▶ Rifampin causes red-orange colored urine, tears, and saliva (and sweat in horses). This effect is not a problem but can stain fabrics.
- ▶ Can cause many serious drug interactions. Be sure to tell your veterinarian and pharmacist about all the drugs your animal is getting.
- ▶ May cause liver damage. Effects on the liver may be worse in older animals. Your veterinarian will monitor for this effect with periodic blood tests. Do not miss these important follow-up visits.

## How is this medication useful?

Rifampin is used most commonly to treat resistant staphylococcal infections in dogs and, in combination with other drugs, to treat pneumonia (foals) or other serious infections (eg, leprosy and tuberculosis). 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 rifampin, 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 have liver problems.

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?

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

- ▶ Red-orange color to the urine, saliva, tears, and sweat (in horses).
- ▶ Skin rash.
- ▶ Stomach upset, vomiting, and diarrhea.

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:**

- ▶ Loss of appetite (eating less or not at all) or development of a yellowish color to the skin, gums, or whites of the eyes (jaundice). Because rifampin can make tears and sweat (in horses) an orange/red color this may be difficult to detect.
- ▶ Fever in foals, especially when rifampin is combined with another antibiotic, erythromycin.
- ▶ Redness of the skin in cats may indicate an overdose.

If you see any of these signs, 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.

- ▶ The drug is best given on an empty stomach, 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.

- ▶ Shake liquid forms of this medication well before each use and be sure to measure the doses carefully. Sometimes compounded rifampin liquids will foam excessively when shaken. Your veterinarian or pharmacist can help by providing special measuring spoons or syringes. Do not spill any of this liquid since it will permanently stain anything it touches.
- ▶ Wear gloves when handling this medication to keep your hands from staining orange/red.
- ▶ If you have difficulty getting your animal 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, then go back to the regular dosing schedule. Do not double-up or give extra doses.

#### **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 and 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?**

Wear gloves when handling to keep from staining your hands. Otherwise, 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.
- ▶ Because this antibiotic can cause liver damage, your veterinarian will monitor for this effect with periodic blood tests. Do not miss these important follow-up visits.

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