

# Silymarin

(sill-e-mare-in)

**Category:** Nutraceutical Hepato-Protectant

**Other Names for this Medication:** Milk Thistle, Silybin, Marin®

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** Supplements are available from a wide variety of sources and dosage forms including tablets & capsules in a variety of concentrations (150 mg - 1000 mg). Products marketed for veterinary use include: *Cats:* Silybin A+B 9 mg with Vitamin E 50 Units tablets. *Dogs:* Silybin A+B 24 mg, Vitamin E 105 Units, & Zinc 17 mg chewable tablets; Silybin A+B 70 mg, Vitamin E 300 Units, & Zinc 45 mg chewable tablets. **Human:** Varies; labeled as supplements, not drugs.

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.
- ▶ Not an FDA approved drug as it is considered a nutritional supplement.
- ▶ Seems to be very safe.
- ▶ Keep chewable tablets out of reach of children and animals.

## How is this medication useful?

Silymarin may be used to treat a variety of liver diseases found in animals, including chronic and acute liver disease, and to protect the liver after toxicities (eg, “Death Cap” mushrooms). It may also be helpful to prevent certain cancers and reducing the side effects of some kinds of cancer chemotherapy treatments.

The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) considers milk thistle or silymarin (silybin) to be a nutritional supplement. No standards have been accepted for potency by regulatory bodies. To ensure quality, use only products recommended by your veterinarian. 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 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 or any other component found in the preparation used.

If your animal is allergic to anything in this product listing, talk to your veterinarian about the possible risks of using the medication versus the benefits.

## What are the side effects of this medication?

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

- ▶ Vomiting, lack of appetite.
- ▶ Itching.

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.

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

While overdoses of silymarin appear to be safe, some products contain other compounds (eg, zinc) that may cause serious effects after an overdose. 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 may be given either with food or on an empty stomach. 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.
- ▶ 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. After that, return 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 sunlight and high humidity.
- ▶ 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 leftover medication for future use or give it to others to use.

#### **What other information is important for this medication?**

- ▶ Use of this medicine 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.**