

Milbemycin

(mil-beh-my-sin)

Category: Heartworm Preventive; Agent to Treat & Control Intestinal Parasites

Other Names for this Medication: Interceptor®

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: 2.3 mg, 5.75 mg, 11.5 mg, & 23.0 mg flavored oral tablets. An otic (ear medication) product (Milbemite®) is also available. **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

- ▶ Monthly prevention of heartworm infection and control of roundworms, hookworms in dogs and cats. Also controls whipworms in dogs.
- ▶ Appears safe when used at labeled doses.
- ▶ Store flavored tablets out of reach of children and animals.

How is this medication useful?

In dogs and cats, oral milbemycin tablets are approved by the FDA for prevention of heartworm infection and to control hookworms and roundworms; it also controls whipworms in dogs. In dogs, milbemycin may also be used at higher dosages for treating some skin parasitic disease (eg, demodectic mange, scabies). Milbemycin has been used to treat reptiles for intestinal parasites and, unlike ivermectin, appears safe to use in turtles or tortoises.

The FDA does allow veterinarians to prescribe and use 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 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.
- ▶ Dogs or puppies less than 4 weeks old or that weigh less than 2 lb
- ▶ Cats or kittens less than 6 weeks old or that weigh less than 1.5 lb

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

- ▶ That have not been tested for heartworm infection. Shock-like reactions can occur if milbemycin is given to animals with heartworm infection.

If your pet has any of these conditions or signs, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks versus benefits.

What are the side effects of this medication?

At labeled dosages, milbemycin is tolerated well. When used at higher dosages for treating skin parasites, side effects may be seen.

Side effects that usually are not serious include:

- ▶ Vomiting after a dose is given. If your animal vomits or acts sick after getting milbemycin on an empty stomach, give with a small amount of food or small treat to see if this helps. If vomiting continues, contact your veterinarian.

You don't have to be overly concerned if you see this unless it is severe, worsens, or continues to be a problem. Contact your veterinarian if this happens.

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

All are very rare, but may indicate an overdose or toxicity (especially in dogs with the *ABCB1-1Δ [MDR1]* genetic mutation):

- ▶ Depression, lack of energy, or weakness.
- ▶ Stumbling or collapse.
- ▶ Seizures (convulsions) or coma.
- ▶ Dilated (big) pupils.
- ▶ Excessive drooling.

If you see any of these, contact your veterinarian immediately.

If my pet 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 immediately 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. Most dogs and cats will eat the flavored tablet willingly. The milbemycin chewable tablets can be broken up and mixed into food or given directly. Watch your animal closely following dosing to be sure the entire dose has been eaten. If it is not entirely consumed, re-dose once with the full recommended dose as soon as possible. If your animal vomits after receiving it on an empty stomach, give with food or treat to see if this helps. If vomiting continues, contact your veterinarian.
- ▶ 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 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 and then wait the amount of time between doses recommended by your veterinarian before giving another dose. Do not double-up or give extra doses.
- ▶ When using this product for heartworm prevention: If more than 8 weeks have passed without giving this medication, start giving the drug as soon as you remember. After that, continuing giving the medication monthly, but make sure to have your animal tested for heartworm infection 6 months later, as your dog may have become infected during the time the medication was not given.

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, as the chewable, flavored forms of the drug can be appealing.

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?

- ▶ Dispose of milbemycin carefully as it is can be toxic to wildlife. 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.

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