

Metronidazole

- Keep this leaflet safe, as you may need to refer to it again.
- Please ask your vet or veterinary nurse if you have any further questions.
- This medicine has been prescribed for your pet ONLY. Do not take it yourself or give it to another person or any other animal; it may harm them even if their symptoms appear to be the same.

The medicine you have been given for your dog or cat is called metronidazole. It may have a trade name such as Metrobactin® or Stomorgyl®, but often will just be called metronidazole.

What is metronidazole?

Metronidazole is an antibiotic drug that treats bacterial infections and infections caused by protozoan (single-celled) parasites. Metronidazole has also been used to manage chronic diarrhoea although its mechanism of action remains unknown and it may also distort the gut microbiome.

Why has my pet been prescribed metronidazole?

Metronidazole is used to treat bacterial infections in dogs and cats caused by anaerobes, a type of bacteria that thrives in the low levels of oxygen found inside abscesses. It is also used to treat bacteria that may be resistant to other antibiotics. Metronidazole is sometimes used to help treat diarrhoea in cats and dogs. It may also be used to treat protozoal infections and some of the complications associated with severe liver disease.

How should I store metronidazole?

This medicine does not require special storage conditions. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

How do I give metronidazole tablets or suspension to my pet?

Metronidazole has a very bitter taste and is best given with a small quantity of strongly flavoured food that your pet likes. Alternatively, it can be placed carefully on the back of your pet's tongue and their mouth held closed until the entire dose has been swallowed. **Ensure gloves are worn when handling the drug. Avoid contact with the skin. Wash hands thoroughly after handling.**

How long will my pet need to take metronidazole?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients. Any unused medication should be returned to your vet for safe disposal. Do not flush down the toilet or put into your household waste.

What should I do if I run out of tablets or suspension?

If you run out of metronidazole, contact your vet the next working day and ask them what they want you to do. It may be that your vet has

prescribed a course that has now come to an end as your pet does not need the treatment any more. It may be that your vet needs to examine your pet before more treatment is prescribed. Remember to take any empty containers with you when you go to see your vet.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

If a dose is missed, give the medication as soon as possible. However, it is best to skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your pet's next scheduled dose. **DO NOT** give a double dose to make up for the missed dose and do not exceed the total stated dose in any one 24-hour period.

What should I do if my pet is accidentally given too many doses?

Contact your vet immediately. An overdose of metronidazole can cause vomiting, a loss of appetite and brain toxicity.

Can my pet take metronidazole if I am already giving them other drugs?

Tell your vet if you are giving your pet any other medications, even if you think they already know. This includes herbal or off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop, pharmacy or health store. Metronidazole should not be given to your pet if they are already taking phenytoin or phenobarbital (both used to treat epilepsy), or cimetidine (used to treat stomach ulcers).

What are the possible side effects of metronidazole for my pet?

Side effects from metronidazole are not common in cats and dogs but can be more likely after longer courses or at higher doses. The bitter taste can cause pawing at the mouth, vomiting, gagging, regurgitation, excessive salivation and foaming at the mouth (more commonly seen in cats). Other rarer side effects that are possible include diarrhoea, darkened or bloody urine, liver failure and generalized weakness. Brain toxicity is possible, particularly with prolonged treatment or in the presence of liver disease. Signs of brain toxicity include rapid and repetitive eye movements (nystagmus), incoordination, knuckling of paws, tremors, rigidity, a head tilt or even fits. If your pet shows these or *any* unusual symptoms whilst taking this medication, please contact your vet.

The Prescribing Cascade

This medicine is authorized for use in human patients and is used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. The medicine is not authorized by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), for use in dogs/cats/pets. Your vet can explain the 'prescribing cascade' in further detail to you and also explain why they are prescribing this drug for your pet. You will be asked to sign a consent form stating that you understand the reasons that the drug is being prescribed and its possible complications, before the treatment is issued.

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What should I do if my pet is unwell while taking metronidazole?

If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, you should not give any further doses and should contact your vet as soon as possible for advice.

What should I do if a person accidentally takes this drug?

If a person accidentally takes your pet's medicine, the person should be taken to the local hospital **immediately**. Take this leaflet and any remaining tablets or suspension plus their container (even if it is empty) with you.

Whom do I contact if I want to know more?

If you have any questions about this drug or concerns about your pet's health, contact your own vet. They will know your pet's medical history and will know about metronidazole.