Cholestyramine

*(ko-less-tie-ra-ween)*

**Description:** Orally administered agent for binding of bile acids & treatment of diarrhea

**Other Names for this Medication:** Questran®; Prevalite®

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** None. **Human:** 4 g powder dose packaged in individual pouches or in canisters with scoop provided; sugar-free products available.

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 used in dogs and cats to remove certain medications or toxins, reduce cholesterol levels, or treat diarrhea caused by some infections.
- Many drug interactions are possible with this medicine. Be sure to talk with your veterinarian or pharmacist about any other medicines you give your animal.
- Be sure your animal always has plenty of fresh, clean water to drink while taking cholestyramine.
- Not for use in animals that are dehydrated, have gastrointestinal or biliary obstruction, or have long-standing biliary problems.
- Constipation, bloating, flatulence, and reduced appetite are the most common side effects.
- Dispose of unused drug in regular trash. Do not pour down drain.

**How is this medication useful?**

Cholestyramine may be prescribed to help eliminate drugs or toxins from your animal’s body. This medicine may also be prescribed to lower your animal’s cholesterol level or to treat certain types of diarrhea. 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 and use human products containing this drug in animals in certain situations. You and your veterinarian can discuss why this drug may be 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 cholestyramine, 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, especially liver diseases.

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.

How long until I will know if this medication is working, and how long will the effects of this medication last?
This medication should help your animal feel better within 1 to 2 days. Your animal’s clinical signs should improve after that time. The effects of this medication are short-lived, meaning they will stop working within 24 hours.

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 cholestyramine.
- That have biliary blockage or biliary cirrhosis.
- With fecal impaction or intestinal obstruction.
- That are dehydrated.

This drug be used WITH CAUTION in patients:

- That have high triglycerides.
- That have gall bladder stones.
- That have kidney problems.
- That are pregnant or nursing.

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:

- Bloating, flatulence (excess gas)
- Nausea and decreased appetite
- Difficulty passing stool (ie, constipation)

You don’t have to be overly concerned if you see any of these signs 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:

- Unable to pass stool
- Loss of appetite
- Bleeding or excessive bruising

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?

Overdoses of cholestyramine are not likely to cause problems as long as adequate water has been available to the animal. 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.

This medicine interacts with many other medications. 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. To minimize interactions, give this medicine at least 1 hour before or 4 to 6 hours after administration of any other medications.

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Mix the prescribed amount of cholestyramine powder into water or food with high moisture content (eg, applesauce).

Administer cholestyramine at meal time.

Be sure your animal always has plenty of fresh, clean water available while taking cholestyramine.

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 dosing and reducing the stress of medication time.

Continue giving this medication according to your veterinarian’s instructions. If you want to stop giving this medicine to your animal, first talk to your veterinarian as there may be important reasons to continue giving it.

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 its original prescription container at room temperature.

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 animals?

There are no specific precautions required when handling this medication as directed on the label 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?

Vitamin supplementation may be needed for your animal if this medicine is administered long-term. Your veterinarian will discuss any needed supplements with you. Do not administer any supplements to your animal without talking with your veterinarian first.

Tooth discoloration or decay has occurred in humans who have sipped the suspension or held the suspension in their mouth for long periods of time. It is unknown if this effect occurs in animals. Talk with your veterinarian about brushing your animal’s teeth after administration of this medicine. Report any concerns to your veterinarian.

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 about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.

Special Instructions:

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