Clenbuterol

(klen-byo-ter-ol)

Description: Bronchodilator

Other Names for this Medication: Ventipulmin®

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: 72.5 micrograms/mL oral syrup. 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

- Usually used in horses with airway obstruction to relax muscles to improve breathing.
- May also used to treat mares with dystocia (difficult birth) emergencies.
- Use with caution during pregnancy as clenbuterol can induce abortion or prevent labor.
- Drug has been abused by humans; keep secure and dispose of unused drug appropriately.
- Illegal to use in food animals (US and other countries). Use may be prohibited in show or racing horses.

How is this medication useful?

Clenbuterol is used to relax the muscles of the airways to improve breathing in horses with airway obstruction. Clenbuterol is also used in pregnant mares to relax the uterus during dystocia (difficult birth) emergencies.

The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for use in horses as a bronchodilator. 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 clenbuterol, 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. Clenbuterol reportedly may either delay labor or induce abortion.

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 start having effects within 1 to 2 hours. Your animal’s clinical signs should improve after that time.

The effects of this medication are moderate in duration, meaning they may last for a few days, although the benefits may be prolonged if your animal has decreased kidney and/or liver function.

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.
- To be consumed by humans for food.
- That are suspected or known to have heart disease.

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

- That are pregnant.

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?

*Common side effects in horses include:*

- Muscle tremors (shaking), restlessness, sweating, slightly faster heart rate, and itching. These signs usually are mild.

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 animal gets too much of this medication (an overdose), what should I do?

Overdoses of clenbuterol can be serious. If you witness or suspect an overdose, immediately contact your veterinarian or an animal poison control center for further advice. Animal poison control centers that are open 24 hours a day include: ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (888-426-4435) and Pet Poison HELPLINE (855-764-7661); 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.

- 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.
- 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.

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, out of direct sunlight; avoid freezing.
- 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 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?
- In the US (and some other countries), it is illegal to use this drug in food animals.
- 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.

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