Domperidone

(dohm-pare-i-done)

**Description:** Prokinetic; Dopamine-2 Agonist

**Other Names for this Medication:** Equidone® Gel

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** 110 mg/mL oral gel in 25 mL syringes. **Human:** None in US; 10 mg tablets may be available in some countries. Compounded dosage forms for use in small animals may be available.

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**How is this medication useful?**

Domperidone is primarily used to prevent fescue toxicosis in pregnant mares. In dogs and cats, domperidone has been used to treat vomiting and stimulate stomach emptying. It has also been used to stimulate milk production in small animals.

The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for use in horses for preventing fescue toxicosis in mares within the last 10 to 15 days of pregnancy. The FDA allows 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.

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**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 medication, 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.

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 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:

- Animals that are allergic to it.
- Animals that have suspected or confirmed gastrointestinal blockage.
- Horses intended for human consumption.

This drug should be used WITH CAUTION in:

- Mares with an expected foaling date that is more than 10 to 15 days away. Domperidone may cause premature birth.
- Mares with equine Cushing's disease or metabolic syndrome.

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:

- Horses: Premature lactation (dripping of milk prior to foaling) and failure to pass protective antibodies to the foal.
- Sleepiness (uncommon).

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.

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

- Failure of passive transfer of protective antibodies to the foal. All foals born to mares treated with domperidone should be tested for serum immunoglobulin (IgG) concentrations.

If my animal 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 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.

Mares (for prevention of fescue toxicity):

- Administer the recommended amount of the oral gel once daily starting 10 to 15 days prior to expected foaling date. Treatment may be continued for up to 5 days after foaling if mares are not producing adequate milk.
- Turn the dial ring until the edge of the ring nearest the tip of the syringe lines up with the dose to be delivered. Remove the syringe cap.
- Make sure the horse’s mouth is free of food or other obstructions. Insert the nozzle of the syringe through the interdental space of the horse’s mouth and deposit the gel on the back of the tongue by depressing the plunger. Recap the syringe.
- The product comes as a 25 mL multidose syringe. For subsequent doses, it will be necessary to adjust the dosage ring for each new dose given. For example, if the intended dose for a horse is 5 mL, then the dial ring is set at 5 mL for the first dose, at 10 mL for the second dose, at 15 mL for the third dose, at 20 mL for the fourth dose, and at 25 mL for the fifth dose.
In small animals, domperidone can be given with or without food. Do not give with antacids or other drugs that reduce stomach acidity.

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, 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 the gel in its original syringe at room temperature. Recap after each use.
- 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?
Pregnant women and people who are allergic to this drug should be careful not to accidentally take this medication. Because this drug has a higher risk for causing birth defects, pregnant women should wear disposable gloves when giving doses or handling the drug and avoid inhaling any dust from split or crushed tablets. Skin or eyes exposed to powder or liquids containing the drug should immediately be washed or rinsed off thoroughly.

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?
- Domperidone can cause a false positive on the milk calcium test used to predict foaling date.
- 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.