Imipramine

(im-ip-ra-meen)

**Description:** Tricyclic Antidepressant; Behavior Modifier

**Other Names for this Medication:** Tofranil®

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** None. **Human:** 10 mg, 25 mg, & 50 mg tablets; 100 mg, 125 mg, & 150 mg capsules. Compounded dosage forms may be available.

Key Information

- Imipramine may be given with or without food. If your animal vomits or acts sick after receiving the drug on an empty stomach, try giving the next dose with food or a small treat. If vomiting continues, contact your veterinarian.
- May take several days to weeks to determine if the drug is effective.
- Most common side effects are sleepiness, dry mouth, and constipation; be sure your animal has access to fresh, clean water at all times.
- Rare side effects that can be serious include abnormal bleeding or fever, seizures, or a rapid or irregular heartbeat. Contact your veterinarian immediately if you see any of these signs.
- Overdoses can be very serious. Keep imipramine out of reach of animals and children.
- Let your veterinarian know if your animal has worn a flea and tick collar in the past 2 weeks. Do not use one of these collars on your animal while administering this medication without first talking to your veterinarian.

**How is this medication useful?**

Imipramine is used to treat urinary leaking, cataplexy (sudden temporary loss of muscle tone), and behavioral problems in dogs and cats. In horses, this drug has been tried for treating narcolepsy and cataplexy and in breeding males for ejaculatory problems. Imipramine has sometimes been used in addition to other painkillers to treat cancer pain in animals.

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 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.

©2019 PharmaVet, Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. Plumb’s® Veterinary Medication Guides have not been reviewed by FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine.
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 imipramine, 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.
- Some ingredients found in flea and tick collars can interact with imipramine, so let your veterinarian know if your animal has worn one in the past 2 weeks. Do not use one on your animal while administering this medicine without first talking to your veterinarian.
- 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 how well the treatment 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 takes several doses before you will see any effect. The medication’s full effects may not be evident until your animal has taken it consistently for several weeks. However, you may not see any improvement of clinical signs outwardly, so your veterinarian may need to run further tests to determine if the drug is working appropriately. 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 allergic to it or other tricyclic antidepressants (eg, clomipramine, amitriptyline).
- Pregnant or nursing animals. Imipramine has caused birth defects and side effects in nursing young.
- Combination with, or within 14 days before or after treatment with a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (eg, selegiline, amitraz)

This drug should be used WITH CAUTION in:
- Animals with seizure disorders (eg, epilepsy), diabetes, adrenal tumors, glaucoma, KCS (dry eye syndrome), or liver, thyroid, or severe heart disease.
- Animals that have problems urinating or defecating.
- Working or service dogs (eg, guide dogs, search dogs, hunting dogs, sled dogs, rescue dogs), as they may become overly sleepy and be unable to perform their duties while on this drug.
- Animals that are older or very young.

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 but usually not serious side effects include:
- Sleepiness.
- Vomiting or loss of appetite (eating less or not at all).
- Diarrhea or constipation.
- Dry mouth, greater thirst.
- Trouble urinating.

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:
- Seizures (convulsions), hyperexcitability (overly excited), or coma.
- Racing or irregular heartbeat.
- Abnormal bleeding.
- Persistent low energy level and lack of an appetite.
- Cats: Hypersalivation (excess saliva/drooling), unsteadiness, unkempt hair coat (rare).

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 imipramine can be very serious. Signs such as vomiting, lack of energy or depression, incoordination, weakness (eg, stumbling, clumsiness), dilated (big) pupils, vocalization, seizures, elevated body temperature (fever), and effects on the heart (racing or irregular heartbeats) are possible. 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.

- May be given with or without food. If your animal vomits or acts sick after receiving the drug on an empty stomach, try giving the next dose with food or a small treat. 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 dosing and reducing the stress of medication time.

- If you want to stop giving this medication before the prescription is completed, first contact your veterinarian. There may be an important reason to continue giving the medication until it’s gone. Imipramine dosing must be tapered off slowly, or your animal may suffer uncomfortable symptoms of withdrawal (eg, vomiting, anxiety, shaking).

What should I do if I miss giving a dose of this medication?

If you miss a dose, either give it when you remember and then wait the regular time between doses recommended by your veterinarian before giving another dose, or give it when it is usually time to give the next 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 (ie, pill minder) container at room temperature and protected from direct sunlight.

- 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 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?

- When used as a behavior treatment, imipramine works best in combination with behavior modification therapy.

- Because this drug can cause dry mouth, be sure your animal has access to fresh, clean water at all times.

- Flea and tick collars that contain amitraz (Preventic®) may interact with imipramine; only use collars that your veterinarian recommends.

- Aged cheeses can possibly cause problems when given with imipramine; do not feed aged cheeses to your animal while giving this medication.

- 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.

Special Instructions:

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________