Cephalexin

Keflex®, Keftab® and Biocel® are other names for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?
- Cephalexin is an antibiotic of the cephalosporin class given orally to treat infections.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?
- Animals that are allergic to penicillin or penicillin-like drugs should not take cephalexin.
- Cephalexin and other cephalosporins must be eliminated by the kidneys. Animals with kidney failure may receive a lower dose of the drug.
- Cephalexin and other cephalosporins can cause seizures in epileptic patients and should be used with caution in these animals.
- Cephalosporins are known to cross into the womb and should be used with caution in pregnant animals.
- You should always give all of the medication as directed by your veterinarian. If the entire course of treatment is not finished, the germ causing the infection may become stronger than the antibiotics and cause a worsening infection.
- If your animal has any of the above conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks of using the medication versus the benefits that it might have.

What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?
- Cephalosporin does not usually cause side effects, however some animals will experience stomach upset, vomiting and diarrhea. Giving cephalexin with food may help reduce this effect.
- Some dogs receiving cephalexin have experienced excessive salivation, panting and excitability.
- Cats have experienced vomiting and fever. Fever in a cat is a temperature of greater than 103°F.
- Cephalexin in very high doses can cause damage to the kidneys.
- Some animals will experience rashes from cephalexin.
- Cephalexin may cause a false positive when used with some brands of dip sticks used to check for sugar in the urine of diabetic animals.

How Should It Be Given?
- The successful outcome of your animal's treatment with this medication depends upon your commitment and ability to administer it exactly as the veterinarian has prescribed. Please do not skip doses or stop giving the medication. If you have difficulty giving doses consult your veterinarian or pharmacist who can offer administration techniques or change the dosage form to a type of medication that may be more acceptable to you and your animal.
- If you miss a dose of this medication you should give it as soon as you remember it, but if it is within a few hours of the regularly scheduled dose, wait and give it at the regular time. Do not double a dose as this can be toxic to your pet.
- Some other drugs can interact with this medication so tell your veterinarian about any drugs or foods that you currently give your animal. Do not give new foods or medications without first asking your veterinarian.
- Dogs and Cats: Dogs and cats usually receive cephalexin orally as a capsule, tablet or liquid two to three times daily.
- Horses: Horses should not receive oral cephalexin as this may cause a life-threatening diarrhea or colic.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?
- Cephalexin should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets. Oral liquids should be stored in the refrigerator for up to 14 days and shaken well before use.
- Pet owners who are allergic to penicillin and penicillin-like drugs should avoid handling this medication.
- It is normal for cephalexin to have a strong sulfurous odor which may smell like cat urine.