Chloramphenicol Ophthalmic

Bemacol®, Chlorbioric® and Chloricol® are other names for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?

- Chloramphenicol is an antibiotic that can penetrate the cornea (clear part of the eye) and reach inside the eye to treat infections. It is mostly used to treat cats with bacterial eye diseases.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?

- Some humans have a fatal allergic reaction to chloramphenicol. This reaction does not occur in animals, but you should always wear gloves when applying chloramphenicol and wash hands afterwards.
- Chloramphenicol must not be used in any animals that will be used for human food.
- 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?

- The medication may cause the eye to sting a bit when first put in the eye.
- Ointments will blur your animal’s vision for a few minutes after administration. You should watch it for a short time to make sure it does not bump into things and injure itself.
- Side effects from chloramphenicol administered in the eye are rare, but prolonged or excessive use of chloramphenicol can cause the same side effects as when chloramphenicol is swallowed.
- Because chloramphenicol can cause blood problems, it should not be used in animals who are already experiencing anemias or bleeding abnormalities.
- Chloramphenicol must be eliminated from the body by the liver and should not be used in patients who have liver failure. If it must be used, then a reduced dose is required but then the risk of not curing the infection is a possibility.
- Chloramphenicol should be used with extreme caution, if at all, in baby animals. This drug can cause the blood vessels to fail to properly circulate blood resulting in lack of oxygen to vital organs. This drug is particularly dangerous when used in kittens.
- Because chloramphenicol is secreted in the milk, it should not be given to nursing mothers.
- Chloramphenicol should also not be used in breeding animals, and should not be used in pregnancy due to adverse effects on the bone marrow of the fetus.

How Should It Be Given?

- Eye drops may be used every 2-6 hours and ointments every 8-12 depending on the condition that your veterinarian is treating.
- If you are giving more than one medication, you should allow 5 minutes between medications to allow the medication to work and to not be washed out by the next medication.
- Medication should be applied in the lower eyelid sac (conjunctival sac) without touching the tip of the dropper or tube to the eye as this will contaminate the medication. Do not touch the dropper or tube tip with your fingers as this will also contaminate the medication.
- 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.
- You should always wash your hands after applying this medication to your pet’s eyes as it can get into your eyes and cause harm or death if you are allergic to chloramphenicol.
- **Dogs and Cats**: Chloramphenicol is usually administered as an ointment three times daily.
- **Horses**: Horses will usually receive chloramphenicol as an ointment two to three times daily or as a solution administered through an eye catheter (subpalpebral lavage system).

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

- Chloramphenicol should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets.
- Your pet’s eye should start to look better in 48 hours. If the eye looks the same or gets worse, you should contact your veterinarian for advice.