

Codeine

How Is This Medication Useful?

- Codeine is an opiate narcotic that is useful to treat moderate pain, cough and diarrhea primarily in dogs, but also in cats.
- In dogs, pain relief usually begins in about 30 minutes after oral dosing and persists for 4-6 hours.

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

- Codeine should not be used in animals who are hypersensitive to it or other opiate drugs (morphine, etc).
- Codeine should not be given to animals who are receiving drugs known as MAO inhibitors (Miltaban[®] Dip, Preventic[®] Flea Collars, Anipryl[®], and isoniazid are a few of these drugs). Aged cheese can also cause this effect, so make sure that your pets do not get into any aged cheese while on this drug.
- It should be used with caution in dogs or cats with thyroid, heart, lung, or adrenal gland diseases.
- Patients with head injuries or old or debilitated animals should receive the drug with caution.
- It must not be used in animals with diarrhea caused by a toxic substance, until that substance has been eliminated.
- Working dogs (*e.g.*, guide dogs, search dogs, hunting dogs, sled dogs, rescue dogs) may become overly sedated and unable to perform their duties while on this drug.
- The combination product that contains codeine and acetaminophen must NOT be used in cats or death may result.
- 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 most common side effect is sedation. Most animals will become tolerant to this effect with time and the sleepiness will wear off.
- Codeine can cause a variety of gastrointestinal effects, including vomiting, decreased appetite, and constipation.
- Cats may become unusually excited while taking this drug and tremors and seizures have been seen.

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. If you have difficulty giving any doses, please do not skip doses or stop giving the medication.
- 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 your veterinarian has prescribed this drug to be used routinely and you miss a dose, you should give it as soon as you remember it, but wait the appropriate amount of time before giving the following doses. 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 this drug orally two to four times daily as a tablet or liquid. Do not give your pet aged cheese or use tick collars while on this drug.
- **Horses:** Horses do not usually receive this medication as it may stop their intestines and cause colic.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

- Codeine is a controlled substance and should not be given to anyone other than the animal for whom it was prescribed. It is in the most restricted category (C-II) when used as a single agent. Your veterinarian will need to write a new prescription each time if this is the form prescribed.
- When prescribed in combination with acetaminophen (not to be used in cats) or aspirin, the medication can be refilled up to 5 times within a 6 month period.
- Codeine tablets or oral solution should be stored at room temperature in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets.