Diethylstilbesterol

DES or Stilphostrol® are other names for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?
- Diethylstilbesterol (DES) is a female estrogen-like hormone that is used to treat urine leaking in some female dogs. It has also been used to treat certain kinds of cancer in both male and female dogs.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?
- DES and other estrogens can be very toxic to the bone marrow of dogs. Estrogens have caused the bone marrow to completely quit making blood cells and cause death in this species.
- DES can also cause a condition called pyometra which is essentially an infection of the uterus.
- Cats who have received DES for long periods of time have developed problems with liver, pancreas and heart.
- DES has caused cancer in offspring of women who took DES during pregnancy. For this reason, DES should not be used in any pregnant animal unless the benefits of treatment far outweigh the risks.
- Pregnant women should avoid all contact with DES.
- Discuss with 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?
- DES can suppress the bone marrow causing poor production of blood cells. This may result in bruising, bleeding, anemia, and increased risk for infection.
- DES can also cause a female dog to come into “heat” and may cause some vaginal spotting. This side effect usually occurs within 1-6 weeks after starting therapy.
- If you notice any signs of tiredness, fever, vomiting, vaginal discharge, excessive water drinking or bruising and bleeding you should notify your veterinarian immediately.

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 usually receive this medication by mouth once daily until the urine leaking has stopped and then is given only once or twice weekly as needed. Cats do not usually receive this medication as they are likely to develop heart, liver and pancreas problems as a result.
- Horses: Horses do not receive this medication.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?
- This drug is not commercially available and must be compounded by a compounding pharmacist.
- If you are pregnant or trying to become pregnant, you should not touch this medication at any time as it may cause cancer in your baby.
- DES should be stored in a tight, light resistant, child proof container away from all children and other household pets.
- This drug is strictly forbidden to be used in any animal that might be used for food.