

# Erythromycin

E-Mycin<sup>®</sup>, EES<sup>®</sup>, Erythrocin<sup>®</sup> and Erygel<sup>®</sup> are other names for this medication.

## How Is This Medication Useful?

- Erythromycin is a macrolide antibiotic used to treat infections.
- It also stimulates movement of the stomach and bowels and is used in cases of stomach and intestinal stoppage.
- Erythromycin is also used as a topical gel to treat bacterial skin infections.
- As it inhibits certain liver enzymes that break down some other drugs, erythromycin has been used to increase the blood levels of a very expensive drug called cyclosporine so that lower doses of cyclosporine can be given.

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

- Oral erythromycin should not be used in adult horses or in rabbits, hamsters and other pocket pets as it will kill all the helpful bacteria in the intestines resulting in fatal diarrheas.
- 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?

- Erythromycin will stimulate the intestines to move and may cause cramping and diarrhea.
- It may kill off the helpful bacteria in the intestines of rabbits and hamsters and may cause a fatal diarrhea.
- It may cause a fever in foals as well as rapid breathing.
- The topical gels can cause irritation and dryness where applied. These gels should be kept away from the eyes as they are very irritating.

## How Should It Be Given?

- Erythromycin should be given orally with food to decrease the likelihood of stomach upset and cramping.
- Topical gels should be used only on affected areas and kept away from eye areas.

- 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 you miss a dose of this medication you should give it as soon as you remember it. 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.
- Because some other drugs interact with this medication, you should 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 may receive erythromycin orally twice daily for infections or to lower the dose of expensive drugs such as cyclosporine. It may also be used topically as a gel on bacterial skin infections.
- **Horses:** Erythromycin is usually given orally twice daily to foals. This medication may cause a drug fever in your foal. If you notice a temperature greater than 102.7° in your foal, contact your veterinarian immediately. If you cannot reach your veterinarian, you should take measures to physically cool the foal with fans and cool water.

## What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

- Erythromycin should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets.
- Oral liquids should be shaken well and stored in the refrigerator unless otherwise instructed.