Itraconazole

Sporanox® is another name for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?
- Itraconazole is used to treat serious fungus infections in animals.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?
- Itraconazole should not be used in animals that have a history of being allergic to it or any other of the antifungal agents like it.
- Because itraconazole can cause damage to the liver, and because the liver is responsible for removing itraconazole from the body, it should not be used in patients who have severe liver disease. If your animal stops eating, becomes lethargic (lacking energy) or has yellowish gums or whites of its eyes, you should contact your veterinarian immediately.
- Itraconazole requires an adequate amount of stomach acid for dissolution and absorption into the blood. It should not be given on an empty stomach and must be given with food. Animals that are on antacids or that are not making enough stomach acid should not receive itraconazole orally as it will not be effective. If your pet must receive antacid medication, you should not give them until 2 hours after itraconazole has been given.
- Itraconazole has caused birth defects in laboratory animals. It should probably not be used in pregnant animals unless it will save the life of the mother. Itraconazole does get into milk in high levels and should not be given to nursing mothers.
- The positive effects of itraconazole may be stopped by some other drugs. Please tell your veterinarian about all drugs that your animal is taking.
- 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?
- Loss of appetite is the most common side effect seen in dogs.
- Damage to the liver is also reported in about 10% of dogs taking itraconazole. This damage may be reversible if the drug is discontinued soon enough.
- About 7% of dogs will develop skin ulcers, inflammation of the veins, and swelling of the legs. Sometimes these effects will go away with lower doses, but sometimes may be severe enough that the drug must be stopped completely. Rarely, a serious condition called toxic epidermal necrolysis can occur that can be fatal.
- Cats generally suffer from loss of appetite, weight loss and vomiting following treatment with itraconazole. Liver toxicity is also possible and increases in liver function tests may indicate that the drug is causing liver problems. This usually goes away after the drug is stopped.
- There have recently been reports of dogs getting heart disease after administration of itraconazole.

How Should It Be Given?
- Itraconazole should be given with food orally once to twice daily. Giving the drug with a fatty food such as butter, milk or cheese will ensure that enough drug gets into the bloodstream. Antacids should not be given during itraconazole administration, as they will prevent absorption of the drug. 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 & Cats: Cats usually receive this drug orally once or twice daily. It should be given with food, preferably a fatty meal.
  - Horses: Horses generally do not receive this medication due to great expense, but when used, it is given orally twice daily.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?
- Itraconazole should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets.