Methimazole

Tapazole® is another name for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?
- Methimazole is a medication given to cats to lower the amount of thyroid hormone. It does not cure an overactive thyroid but will control this disease if given to the animal for the rest of its life.
- It may sometimes also be given to dogs that are receiving cisplatin chemotherapy to protect the kidneys.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?
- Methimazole should not be used in animals that have shown an allergy to it or drugs like it.
- Methimazole may cause serious effects on the liver as well as the blood and immune systems. This drug should probably not be used in animals that already have anemia, liver disease, or problems with their immune system.
- Methimazole may be used in pregnant animals but may cause low thyroid function in the babies. Kittens born to mothers taking methimazole should be placed on a milk replacer after they have nursed colostrum from the mother.
- 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?
- Most side effects happen in the first year of therapy. The most common side effect is vomiting and loss of appetite.
- Some cats will develop a skin condition from methimazole and will scratch until open bloody sores result. If you notice the development of sores on your cat, you should call your veterinarian immediately. Methimazole treatment should be stopped in these cats.
- Some animals will develop an anemia from methimazole. If you notice that your cat is unusually tired, has a fever (>103°F) or shows signs of bruising, you should contact your veterinarian immediately.
- Very rarely some cats receiving methimazole will develop myasthenia gravis, a disease that severely weakens the muscles.

How Should It Be Given?
- Methimazole is usually given orally once to three times daily as a tablet or an oral liquid. It is also frequently given as a topical gel (transdermal) that you rub into your cat's ears twice daily. If you are using the gel form of methimazole, you should always wear gloves and wash your hands well after use.
- 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: Cats receive methimazole orally or as a topical gel once to three times daily for the rest of their life. Dogs do not usually receive methimazole, but your veterinarian may give methimazole just prior to chemotherapy to protect the kidneys.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?
- Methimazole should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets.
- If you are administering methimazole transdermal gel, you should wear gloves and wash hands after handling. Owners who have low thyroid function should be very careful when handling this drug and should avoid all skin contact with the drug.