Morphine Sulfate

How Is This Medication Useful?
- Morphine is a narcotic that is useful to treat moderate to severe pain, especially in dogs. It has also been used to treat severe cough or diarrhea.
- Use of oral sustained release tablets is increasingly being used by veterinarians to reduce pain associated with cancer or other causes.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?
- Morphine should not be used in animals who are hypersensitive to it or other opiate drugs (codeine, etc).
- Morphine should not be given to animals who are receiving drugs known as MAO inhibitors (Mitaban® 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, kidney, liver, lung, or adrenal gland diseases.
- Patients with head injuries, and old or debilitated animals should also 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.
- Horses may become overly stimulated when receiving morphine by injection and it should be administered by injection only by a veterinarian.
- 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 in dogs is sedation. Most animals will become tolerant to this effect with time and the sleepiness will wear off.
- Morphine can cause a variety of gastrointestinal effects, including vomiting, decreased appetite, and constipation. Dogs may defecate suddenly and unexpectedly after receiving the first dose of morphine. Make sure your dog has access to the outdoors when giving the first dose of morphine, or at least make sure it is laying on a washable or disposable pad in case your pet has an accident.
- Morphine depresses breathing function which may cause problems in susceptible animals.
- Dogs may develop low body temperature and cats may experience increased body temperature while receiving morphine.
- Cats may become unusually excited while taking this drug and tremors and seizures have been noted.

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 morphine orally two to six times daily depending on their degree of pain. Do not give your pet aged cheese or use tick collars while on this drug.
- Horses do not usually receive morphine orally as it can stop the intestines and lead to colic.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?
- Morphine is a controlled substance and should not be given to anyone other than the animal for whom it was prescribed. It is in a very restricted category and your veterinarian will need to write a new prescription each time you fill this prescription.
- Morphine 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.
- Morphine is available for injectable use, but it should be given by your veterinarian.