Natamycin Ophthalmic

Natacyn® is another name for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?

• Natamycin is a strong antifungal medication that is used to treat fungus infections of the clear part (cornea) of the eyes. This condition usually occurs in horses and treatment usually lasts at least 4-6 weeks.

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

• Natamycin is a thick white liquid that may clog the special eye catheter (subpalpebral lavage system) that your veterinarian has placed under your horse’s skin. If it leaks out of the catheter into the skin around your horse’s eye, it will be very painful. Your veterinarian may want you to put the drops directly into the sac of the eye and not use the catheter.

What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?

• This medication will likely cause stinging when placed in the eye.

• Once the medication starts killing off the fungus, the eye will at first become swollen and cloudy. This is a good sign that the fungus is dying. If this persists after 48 hours you should call your veterinarian.

• Natamycin is thick and milky and will blur your horse’s vision for a few minutes after administration. You should watch it for a short time to make sure it does not bump into things and injure itself or its eye.

How Should It Be Given?

• Eye drops may be used every 1-2 hours during the first few days of treatment and then four to six times daily for 4-6 weeks afterwards. Natamycin should be shaken well before using.

• If you are giving more than one medication, you should allow 5 minutes between medications to allow the medication to work and to not be washed out by the next medication. If you are placing medications through the catheter system, you should push some air, not liquid, through the tubing between drugs to push the drops to the eye.

• Medication should be applied in the lower eyelid sac (conjunctival sac) without touching the tip of the dropper or tube to the eye as this will contaminate the medication. Do not touch the dropper or tube tip with your fingers as this will also contaminate the medication.

• 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.

• You should always wash your hands after applying this medication to your pet’s eyes.

Dogs and Cats: Natamycin is not usually administered to dogs or cats.

Horses: Horses will usually receive natamycin as a solution administered through an eye catheter (subpalpebral lavage system) every one to two hours for the first few days and then every 4-6 hours afterwards for 4-6 weeks.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

• Natamycin should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets. It should be shaken well before use.

• Natamycin is very expensive.

• Your horse’s eye should start to look better in 48 hours. If the eye looks the same or gets worse, you should contact your veterinarian for advice.