Omeprazole

Gastrogard®, Prilosec® and Nexium® are other names for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?
- Omeprazole is a medication that is used to treat stomach ulcers as well as to prevent the formation of stomach ulcers. It works by reducing the amount of acid that enters the stomach.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?
- Animals allergic to omeprazole or to drugs like it should not receive this drug.
- As omeprazole is removed from the body by the liver and kidneys, it should be used with caution in animals with liver and kidney disease or the drug may become toxic.
- It is not known whether omeprazole can be used safely in pregnant animals. Some laboratory animals have shown a higher rate of miscarriage when high doses of omeprazole are given. It should probably only be used in pregnant or nursing mothers if it will save the life of 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?
- There are few side effects from omeprazole. It may cause a rash in some animals.
- Some animals may develop stomach ache, vomiting and diarrhea, and excessive gas. If your animal develops any of these side effects, you should contact your veterinarian.
- Some humans have developed anemia while taking this drug, but it is not known if this effect occurs in animals.
- Because of some possible links to cancer when used in lab animals, omeprazole is generally not used for longer than 4 weeks in dogs and cats and 90 days in horses. If the benefits outweigh the risks, however, it may be given for longer.

How Should It Be Given?
- Omeprazole capsules should be given unopened. If your veterinarian has instructed you to give omeprazole capsules as a liquid, you should be very careful when handling the beads inside the capsules and only mix it with fruit juices. It should not be mixed with water or milk as these will destroy the protective covering on the beads.
- The paste for horses should be given as directed by the veterinarian. The person giving the paste should pay attention to the marks on the handle of the tube. If you are not giving whole tubes of paste each dose, your veterinarian will show you exactly where to dial the ring on the tube to avoid over-dosing your horse.
- 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:** Dogs and cats usually receive this medication orally once daily.
- **Horses:** Horses usually receive this drug orally once daily for a month while treating ulcers. Some horses will receive omeprazole for one more month at a lower dose to prevent the ulcers from coming back.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?
- Omeprazole should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets. It should never be stored at temperatures higher than 86°F, so you should keep it indoors during the hot part of summer or in climates where the temperature exceeds 86°F. The barn is generally not a good place to store drugs.
- Omeprazole is considered a Class 5 drug by the Association of Racing Commissioners International.