

Ondansetron

Zofran® is another name for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?

- Ondansetron is a drug that stops or prevents severe vomiting such as that seen with chemotherapy. Animals who have been given ondansetron for severe vomiting seem to be much more relaxed and comfortable within 15 minutes of getting the drug. It is one of the strongest anti-vomiting drugs available, but because of its great expense, is usually used only when other drugs have failed to stop vomiting.

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

- Ondansetron may mask the symptoms of a stomach or intestinal blockage or stoppage.
- As ondansetron is removed from the body by the liver, it should be used very carefully in animals that have liver disease as the drug may become toxic to your pet.
- Collies and some other herding breeds may be very sensitive to ondansetron and may have severe side effects from this drug.
- 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?

- Ondansetron has very few side effects at normal doses. It may cause constipation.
- Rarely in humans, it has caused irregular heart beat, low blood pressure, and jerky movements of the muscles. It is not known if it has these same effects in animal patients.

How Should It Be Given?

- Ondansetron is usually given orally once to twice daily. It may also be given by injection by your veterinarian just prior to giving chemotherapy at the veterinary clinic.
- If your veterinarian prescribes the topical gel form of ondansetron, you should make sure that you wear gloves when applying it to your pet.

- 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 drug as an injection in the veterinary clinic. It may also be given orally once to three times daily. As animals with severe vomiting do not keep medication on the stomach very well, ondansetron has also been compounded by pharmacists into a gel that can be rubbed on the skin to stop vomiting.
- **Horses:** Due to the great expense of ondansetron, it is not usually given to horses.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

- Ondansetron should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets.
- Ondansetron is very expensive, but also very effective in stopping vomiting.