Pancrelipase

Pancrezyne® and Viokase® are other names for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?
- Pancrelipase is a collection of secretions (enzymes) from the pancreas that are given to animals whose pancreas has stopped functioning. These enzymes are necessary to help your pet digest fat, protein and sugars in its diet. As pets that do not properly digest their food get diarrhea, pancrelipase helps digest food and stop diarrhea. It is also given to animals such as rabbits and cats to help digest fur balls.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?
- Since pancrelipase is collected from pig pancreas, it should not be used in animals that have shown an allergy to pork products. Talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks of using the medication versus the benefits that it might have if your animal has pork sensitivity.
- Inhalation of the powder will cause irritation of the lungs and throat and may trigger an asthma attack. Do not inhale this powder or let your pet inhale the powder.
- It will also burn skin on contact. Wash immediately if you get any on your skin or your pet’s skin.

What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?
- High doses may cause diarrhea, vomiting, excessive gas and stomach cramping.

How Should It Be Given?
- Pancrelipase is usually most effective when given as a powder. It is also available in capsules and tablets.
- Pancrelipase should be mixed on the food and left to stand for 15-20 minutes before feeding. This gives the drug a chance to digest nutrients that are helpful to your pet.
- Once your pet’s diarrhea gets better, your veterinarian may have you try decreasing the dose to the least amount that prevents diarrhea and allows your pet to gain weight.
- 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 pancrelipase that has been mixed with food and left to stand for 15-20 minutes before feeding.
- Horses: Horses do not usually receive pancrelipase enzymes because their diet is very different from dogs and cats and they do not require these enzymes for digestion.
- Rabbits: Rabbits may get pancrelipase powder mixed in yogurt to help dissolve fur balls.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?
- Pancrelipase should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets.
- Because it is a strong digestive enzyme, it will irritate and burn your skin. If you get it on your skin or the pet’s skin, you should wash it off immediately.
- There is also a form of pancrelipase made for humans. It does not contain as much enzymes as the product made for pets. Be sure that you get the right form for your pet.
- Pancrelipase therapy can be very expensive and is usually given for life.