Rifampin

Rifadin® and Rimactane® are other names for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?
- Rifampin is an antibiotic used to treat certain kinds of infections in animals. It is usually used for infections involving the lungs.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?
- Rifampin should not be used in animals that are allergic to it or to drugs like it. You should give rifampin regularly and not skip any doses as irregular dosing may increase the risk of an allergic reaction to rifampin.
- Rifampin is removed from the body by the liver and should be used at lower doses, if at all, in animals with liver disease.
- Rifampin should not be used alone as an antibiotic. It is easier for the bacteria become resistant to it when used alone.
- Rifampin has caused birth defects at high doses in laboratory animals, but it has been used safely in pregnant humans.
- You should always give all of the medication as directed by your veterinarian. If the entire course of treatment is not finished, the germ causing the infection may become stronger than the antibiotics and cause a worsening infection.
- 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?
- Rifampin most commonly will cause the body secretions (tears, saliva, urine) to become orange. This is normal and harmless to the animal although it may cause permanent stains on carpet and furniture. Touching the drug will also stain human skin and will not easily wash off.
- Some animals given the drug have developed rashes.
- Many animals will develop stomach upset with rifampin. It should still be given on an empty stomach to make sure that it gets into the bloodstream.
- Rifampin may cause an increase in liver enzymes and your veterinarian will want to watch your pet's liver while taking this medication.
- The action of rifampin affects or is affected by many other drugs. You should tell your veterinarian about any other drugs that you are giving your pet.

How Should It Be Given?
- Rifampin should be given orally once or twice daily as directed by your veterinarian. It should be given on an empty stomach for complete effect. If you open the capsules or handle the oral liquid, it will likely stain your skin orange. This stain is harmless (unless you are allergic to rifampin) but will be difficult to wash off. You should wear gloves when handling this medication to avoid staining. Oral liquids of rifampin will need to be shaken well and kept in the refrigerator.
- Your veterinarian will prescribe another antibiotic (usually erythromycin) to use with the rifampin. Do not give one without the other as it may cause the bacteria to become resistant to the rifampin.
- 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: Rifampin is usually given orally as a liquid or a capsule once to three times daily.

Horses: Adult horses rarely receive rifampin, but foals receive it orally three times daily usually along with another antibiotic (erythromycin). You should increase the dose as directed by your veterinarian as your foal gains weight to make sure it is getting an adequate dose.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?
- Rifampin should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets. Oral liquids should be shaken well and stored in the refrigerator.
- Disposable gloves should be worn when handling or giving this drug to animals as this medication can stain skin and can cause rashes in people.
- You should make sure your pet has plenty of opportunity to use the litter box or eliminate outside as rifampin turns urine orange and this orange urine will stain carpets and furniture.