Terbutaline

Brethine® and Bricanyl® are other names for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?
- Terbutaline is a drug that dilates the lung passages to allow air to get into the lungs of animals with asthma or other respiratory diseases.
- It is also sometimes injected under the skin to diagnose a condition called anhydrosis in horses; a condition where they cannot sweat.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?
- Terbutaline should not be used in animals who are known to be allergic to it and drugs like it.
- Terbutaline speeds up the heart and should not be used in animals with heart disease.
- Terbutaline should be used with caution, if at all, in patients with overactive thyroid, diabetes, seizures, and high blood pressure.
- Terbutaline should not be used in pregnant animals.
- 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?
- Terbutaline can speed up the heart and cause a racing heart beat. If your animal’s pulse is consistently over 200 while taking terbutaline, you should contact your veterinarian.
- Terbutaline also causes trembling, shakiness, nervousness, vomiting and diarrhea.
- Terbutaline may decrease the amount of potassium in the blood. Call your veterinarian if your animal shows signs of weakness or muscle trembling.
- Terbutaline affects or is affected by many other drugs. Tell your veterinarian about any drugs that your pet may be receiving before giving terbutaline.

How Should It Be Given?
- 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 two to three times daily.

Horses: It may be injected under your horse’s skin in varying amounts to see if your horse can sweat properly. It is considered a Class 3 drug by the Association of Racing Commissioners International (ARCI).

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?
- Terbutaline should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets.