

Ursodiol

Actigall® is another name for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?

- Ursodiol is a bile acid that is given orally to treat liver and gallbladder disease in cats.
- It may also be used to assist in removal of cholesterol containing gallstones.

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

- Ursodiol should not be used in rabbits and other animals that are hindgut fermenters as these species will turn ursodiol into a very toxic substance that will severely damage the liver.
- Animals receiving ursodiol should not receive acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or other drugs that are removed from the body by a process called sulfation. Tell your veterinarian about other drugs that your animal may be taking.
- Ursodiol should not be used in patients that have shown an allergy to it or other bile acid like drugs.
- Ursodiol may actually worsen liver function in some patients and should be discontinued if liver tests indicate that liver function is worsening.
- 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?

- Ursodiol is generally well-tolerated in dogs and cats although some may experience diarrhea.
- Ursodiol will not dissolve existing gallstones and other measures must be undertaken to remove these stones.

How Should It Be Given?

- Ursodiol should be given orally once or twice daily with oil or a fatty meal.
- Because ursodiol is only available as a capsule for humans, your veterinarian may prescribe a compounded formulation to achieve the right dose for your animal. Ursodiol may be compounded into capsules which can be given with oil or sprinkled on food, or it may be compounded into an oral liquid in oil.

- 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 ursodiol orally with a fatty meal twice daily.
- **Horses:** Horses do not have gallbladders, so ursodiol would not be of any use in this species.
- **Rabbits/Guinea Pigs:** Ursodiol should not be used in these species as it is converted to a very toxic substance in their hindguts and will cause severe (fatal) liver damage.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

- Ursodiol should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets.
- Liquid forms of ursodiol should be shaken well and discarded after about 35 days.
- Ursodiol should not be given with a drug called cholestyramine (Questran®) as it will completely bind up the drug and prevent it from working.