Atovaquone

*ah-toe-va-kwone*

**Description:** Antiprotozoal Agent

**Other Names for this Medication:** Mepron®

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** None. **Human:** 750 mg/5 mL (150 mg/mL) oral suspension; compounded dosage forms may be available.

This information sheet does not contain all available information for this medication. It is to help answer commonly asked questions and help you give the medication safely and effectively to your animal. If you have other questions or need more information about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.

**Key Information**

- Before using, shake bottle gently.
- To increase absorption, give this medicine with food that is high in fat (eg, ice cream, tuna oil, butter, meat fat).
- Adverse side effects in dogs and cats are not well known. Report any significant side effects such as rash, or severe or continued vomiting or diarrhea to veterinarian.

**How is this medication useful?**

Atovaquone may be used to treat certain protozoal parasitic infections in dogs or cats. It is often used in combination with other drugs (eg, azithromycin). The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for use in humans but it is not officially approved for use in animals. The FDA allows veterinarians to prescribe products containing this drug in different species or for other conditions in certain situations. You and your veterinarian can discuss why this drug is the most appropriate choice.

**What should I tell my veterinarian to see if this medication can be safely given?**

Many things might affect how well this drug will work in your animal. Be sure to discuss the following with your veterinarian so together you can make the best treatment decisions.

- Other drugs can interact with atovaquone, so be sure to tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including vitamins, supplements, or herbal therapies) you give your animal, including the amount and time you give each.
- Tell your veterinarian about any conditions or diseases your animal may have now or has had in the past.
- If your animal has been treated for the same disease or condition in the past, tell your veterinarian about the treatment and how well it did or didn’t work.

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If your animal is pregnant or nursing, talk to your veterinarian about the risks of using this drug.

Tell your veterinarian and pharmacist about any medication side effects (including allergic reactions, lack of appetite, diarrhea, itching, hair loss) your animal has developed in the past.

**How long until I will know if this medication is working, and how long will the effects of this medication last?**

This medication takes several doses before you will see any effect. The medication’s full effects may not be evident until your animal has taken it consistently for several weeks, but you will see a gradual improvement of your animal’s clinical signs until the medication becomes fully effective. The effects of this medication are long-lived, meaning they may last for multiple (ie, 4 to 6) weeks, although they may be prolonged if your animal has decreased kidney and/or liver function.

**When should this medication not be used or be used very carefully?**

No drug is 100% safe in all patients, but your veterinarian will discuss with you any specific concerns about using this drug in your animal.

This drug **SHOULD NOT** be used in patients:

- That are allergic to it.

**What are the side effects of this medication?**

*Common but not serious side effects include:*

- Atovaquone has not been used often in dogs or cats so possible side effects are not well known. Thus far, it seems to be tolerated well by animals. Diarrhea, vomiting, or rashes are the side effects most commonly seen in people and these may occur in animals also. If these or other side effects occur in your animal, contact your veterinarian.

If my animal gets too much of this medication (an overdose), what should I do?

There is little information available about overdoses of atovaquone. It does not seem to be very toxic, but if you witness or suspect an overdose and your animal shows side effects, contact your veterinarian or an animal poison control center for further advice. Animal poison control centers that are open 24 hours a day include: ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (888-426-4435) and Pet Poison HELPLINE (855-764-7661); a consultation fee is charged for these services.

**How should this medication be given?**

For this medication to work, give it exactly as your veterinarian has prescribed. It’s a good idea to always check the prescription label to be sure you are giving the drug correctly.

- Before using, shake gently.
- To increase the amount of drug absorbed, give this medicine with a food high in fat (eg, ice cream, tuna oil, butter, meat fat).
- Liquid forms of this medication must be measured carefully. Your veterinarian or pharmacist can help by providing special measuring spoons or syringes.
- If you have difficulty getting your animal to take the medicine, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist for tips to help dosing and reducing the stress of medication time.
- This medication can be given for various lengths of time. Be sure you understand how long your veterinarian wants you to continue giving this medication. Prescription refills may be necessary before the therapy will be complete. Before stopping this medication, talk to your veterinarian, as there may be important reasons to continue its use.

**What should I do if I miss giving a dose of this medication?**

If you miss a dose, give it when you remember, but if it is close to the time for the next dose, skip the dose you missed and give it at the next scheduled time. After that, return to the regular dosing schedule. Do not double-up or give extra doses.

**How should I store this medication?**

- Store medication at room temperature and away from bright light.
- If your veterinarian or pharmacist has made (compounded) a special formulation for your animal, follow the noted storage recommendations and expiration date for the product.
- Keep out of reach of children and other animals.

**Can handling this medication be hazardous to me, my family, or other animals?**

There are no specific precautions required when handling this medication unless you are allergic to it. Wash your hands after handling any medication.
How should I dispose of this medication if I don’t use it all?

- Do not flush this medication down the toilet or wash it down the sink. If a community drug “take-back” program is available, use this option. If there is no take-back program, mix the drug with coffee grounds or cat litter (to make it undesirable to children and animals and unrecognizable to people who might go through your trash), place the mixture in a sealable plastic bag to keep it from leaking out, and throw the bag out with the regular trash.
- Do not save leftover medication for future use or give it to others to use.

What other information is important for this medication?

Use of this drug may not be allowed in certain animal competitions. Check rules and regulations before entering your animal in a competition while this medication is being administered.

If you have any other questions about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.