

Prescription Label

Patient Name:
Species:
Drug Name & Strength:
Directions (amount to give how often & for how long):

Prescribing Veterinarian's Name & Contact Information:

Refills:

[Content to be provided by prescribing veterinarian]

Asparaginase

(*a-spar-a-gin-ase*)

Description:

Anticancer Agent

Common Dosage Forms:

Veterinary: None. **Human:** 10,000 units in a lyophilized vial for reconstitution.

This information sheet does not contain all available information for this medication and has not been reviewed by FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine. This sheet can help answer commonly asked questions but is not a substitute for medical advice. If you have other questions or need more information about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.

Key Information

- ▶ Asparaginase is a chemotherapy (anticancer) drug.
- ▶ In the past, it was felt that asparaginase could be hazardous to other animals and people that come in contact with it, but current understanding is that asparaginase is not hazardous in this way.
- ▶ Asparaginase should **NOT** be used in patients with pancreatitis or that have a history of pancreatitis.
- ▶ This drug is administered at the veterinary clinic.

How is this medication useful?

Asparaginase is used to treat a variety of veterinary cancers and is used most commonly at the beginning of lymphoma therapy to induce remission. 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.

- ▶ Tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including vitamins, supplements, or herbal therapies) you are giving your animal, as well as the amount and schedule of 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.
- ▶ 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. Animals who have had previous allergic reactions to asparaginase should not receive it again.

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 days until beneficial effects occur. Full effects of this medication may not be evident for several weeks. However, side effects (eg, upset stomach or sleepiness) may occur right away. Improvement of clinical signs will be gradual over the time that it takes the medication to reach its full efficacy. The effects of this medication are moderate in duration, meaning they may last for a few days, although the benefits 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:

- ▶ With pancreatitis or a history of pancreatitis.
- ▶ That have experienced a serious allergic reaction to asparaginase.

This drug should be used **WITH CAUTION** in patients:

- ▶ That have severe liver, kidney, blood, or nervous system damage.

If your animal has any of these conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks versus benefits.

What are the side effects of this medication?

Side effects that may be serious or indicate a serious problem:

- ▶ Asparaginase can cause an immediate allergic reaction in some animals, especially after it is given in the vein. Reactions are more likely to happen after repeated doses. Allergic reactions can cause vomiting, diarrhea, itching, breathing problems, and collapsing/fainting. These effects can be fatal if not treated. For this reason, your veterinarian will likely give your animal antihistamines prior to administering this drug.
- ▶ Severe inflammation of the pancreas, blood clotting problems, high blood sugar, and liver toxicity. Signs that might be seen include vomiting, severe or bloody diarrhea, lack of appetite, yellowing of eyes, skin, or gums (jaundice), painful abdomen (stomach), bleeding, seizures (convulsions), or severe changes in behavior.
- ▶ Bone marrow suppression is not as likely with asparaginase as it is with other cancer drugs. Signs of a problem include weakness, fever, bleeding (including bloody diarrhea), bruising, or infection.

If you see any of these signs, contact your veterinarian immediately.

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

For any suspected drug overdose, 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?

Your veterinarian will administer this drug by injection in the clinic. When you bring your animal home, watch for any adverse reactions listed above or others your veterinarian has described.

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

You will not be administering this medication at home, and it is important to bring your pet to every scheduled appointment while receiving this medication.

How should I store this medication?

You will not be taking this medication home.

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

- ▶ You will not be handling this medication, but for a few days after your animal receives it, this drug can be found in the animal’s saliva, urine, feces, and blood.
- ▶ Wear gloves when disposing of cat litter or dog droppings or cleaning up urine spills or vomit. Do not reuse gloves. Seal the waste with all gloves and items used to clean it (eg, paper towels) in a plastic bag, then place into an additional plastic bag (double bag) before putting in the regular trash.
- ▶ Do not let treated animals lick human skin. If skin exposure occurs, the area should be washed thoroughly with soap and water. Contact your physician if you have any concerns.
- ▶ Pregnant women should be careful when handling any waste or items used to clean the waste while your animal is on this drug.

How should I dispose of this medication if I don’t use it all?

This medicine is only given in your veterinarian’s office, so you will not need to dispose of it.

What other information is important for this medication?

- ▶ Your veterinarian will need to perform follow up examinations and lab work on your animal after it receives this medication. Do not miss these important follow-up visits.
- ▶ Your animal should not receive vaccines containing live (or modified live) viruses while receiving this medication.
- ▶ Your animal should not participate in animal competitions while on this drug. Exposure to other animals may put your animal at serious risk of infections during chemotherapy treatment. Talk with your veterinarian about when it is safe to return to these events.

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

Special Instructions
