# Amantadine

*(a-**man**-ta-deen)*
**Category:** Chronic pain reliever; Antiviral (horses)
**Other Names for this Medication:** Symmetrel®
**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** None. **Human:** 100 mg tablets and capsules; 50 mg/5 mL (10 mg/mL) oral liquid. Compounded dosage forms may be available.

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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

- Used to manage chronic pain in dogs and cats; has also been used to treat influenza viral infections in horses.
- May take 7-10 days to reach desired pain relieving effect.
- May be given with or without food. If your pet vomits or acts sick after receiving the drug on an empty stomach, try giving the next dose with food or a small treat. If vomiting continues, contact your veterinarian.
- Diarrhea and/or gas most likely side effect(s); some agitation (anxious, nervous, upset, unable to relax) may occur particularly early in treatment; contact your veterinarian if serious, or persists.
- Overdoses with this medication can be very serious; keep well out of reach of children and other animals.

### How is this medication useful?

Amantadine is an antiviral drug with a useful side effect of pain relief. Veterinarians typically prescribe amantadine with other pain relievers to manage chronic pain in dogs and cats. When used alone, amantadine is usually not effective for pain. Amantadine is also used for treating influenza infection in horses.

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 amantadine, 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 pet 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 pet has developed in the past.

### 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 or drugs like it.
- With certain types of glaucoma.

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

- With kidney or liver problems, congestive heart failure, certain skin inflammatory conditions, or seizure disorders (eg, epilepsy).
- With active behavioral problems.

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

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

***Common, but not serious side effects include:***

- Agitation (anxious, nervous, upset, unable to relax).
- Flatulence (excess gas production).
- Soft stools and diarrhea.

You don't have to be overly concerned if you see any of these unless they are severe, worsen, or continue to be a problem. Contact your veterinarian if this happens.

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

- Seizures (convulsions), tremors (shaking), collapsing (fainting).
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat.
- Trouble breathing.
- Fever.

If you see any of these signs, contact your veterinarian immediately as it can mean the dose is too high.

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

Overdoses of even small amounts of amantadine can be serious or life threatening. If you witness or suspect an overdose, immediately 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.

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**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.

- Amantadine may be given with or without food. If your pet vomits or acts sick after receiving the drug on an empty stomach, try giving the next dose with food or a small treat. If vomiting continues, contact your veterinarian.
- Liquid forms of this medication must be measured carefully. Your veterinarian or pharmacist can help by providing special measuring spoons or syringes. The commercially available liquid form of this drug is reported to have a very bad taste, so compounding may be necessary to prepare it in a way that your animal will accept.
- 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, wait and give the next dose when it is usually time to do so. Do not double-up doses or give an extra dose.

**How should I store this medication?**

- Store this medication in the original child-resistant prescription bottle or a child-resistant approved dosage reminder (ie, pill minder) container at room temperature. Protect from moisture.
- If your veterinarian or pharmacist has made (compounded) a special formulation for your animal, follow the storage recommendations and expiration date for the product.
- Keep away from children and other animals.

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

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 left over medication for future use or give it to others to use.

**What other information is important for this medication?**

- The FDA has banned the use of amantadine in chickens, turkeys, and ducks.
- 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 or concerns about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.**

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