

# Gentamicin Sulfate, Topical

(en-ta-mye-sin sul-fate)

**Category:** Topical Antibacterial (Antibiotic) Agent

**Other Names for this Medication:** Gentocin®, Betagen®

**Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary:** Gentamicin sulfate topical spray: 0.057% in combination with betamethasone; Otic (ear) medications: 0.3% ointment combined with clotrimazole and betamethasone or mometasone. **Human:** 0.1% cream & ointment.

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

- ▶ Sprays are used to treat small areas of minor bacterial skin infections.
- ▶ When sprayed on ulcerated or burned skin the drug can be absorbed into the body, which may cause side effects.
- ▶ Ear treatments are used for outer ear infections.

## How is this medication useful?

The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved gentamicin topical spray for use in dogs to treat superficial bacterial skin infections that respond to this antibiotic. The FDA has also approved ear medications containing this drug for use in dogs with bacterial and/or yeast infections of the outer ear. 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 this medication, 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.
- ▶ 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.

## 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:

- ▶ Animals that are allergic to it.
- ▶ Animals with ruptured ear drums.

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

- ▶ Females near the end of pregnancy.
- ▶ In patients with ulcerated or burned skin.

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?

Gentamicin topical spray and ear treatments are usually well tolerated.

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

- ▶ Infections that do not appear to be healing.
- ▶ Loss of appetite, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- ▶ Frequent drinking and urination.
- ▶ Loss of hearing.
- ▶ Development of a head tilt; staggering or acting uncoordinated (clumsy).

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?

If you witness or suspect an 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: **Pet Poison HELPLINE** (855-764-7661) and **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center** (888-426-4435); 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 applying gentamicin-containing topical sprays, remove excessive hair and clean the area to be treated. Hold the bottle upright and about 3-6 inches away from the affected area. Depress the sprayer the prescribed number of times. The number of treatments per day and the number of days to apply the spray to your pet will be prescribed by the veterinarian.
- ▶ Before applying gentamicin-containing ear ointments, the ear canal should be cleaned and dried. Clean the ears according to your veterinarian's instructions. Once the ear canals are clean and dry, instill the prescribed amount of medicine into the ear(s). Massage the base of the treated ear(s) to spread the medicine in and around the ear canal. Be sure the medicine is applied to all areas of redness inside the ear, including the ear flap. Follow your veterinarian's instructions for how long and how often the medicine should be applied.
- ▶ If you have difficulty getting your animal to accept the treatment, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist for tips to help with 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, give it when you remember and then wait the amount of time between doses recommended by your veterinarian before giving another dose. Do not double-up or give extra doses.

#### **How should I store this medication?**

- ▶ Store this medication in the original prescription bottle at room temperature and protected from light.
- ▶ Some ear medications require the container to be shaken well before application.
- ▶ 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, but it is always a good idea to wash your hands after handling any medication. If you are allergic to the medication, wear gloves when handling.

#### **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.
- ▶ Do not stop giving the medication before your veterinarian recommends, even if the infection appears to have resolved. Stopping treatment early may lead to chronic infections.
- ▶ Your veterinarian will want to recheck your animal to make sure the infection has completely resolved. Do not miss these important follow-up visits.

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