

Butorphanol

(byoo-tor-fa-nol)

Category: Opiate (partial agonist) Analgesic (pain reliever)

Other Names for this Medication: Stadol®, Torbutrol®, Torbugesic®

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: 0.5 mg/mL, 2 mg/mL, & 10 mg/mL injection; 1 mg, 5 mg, and 10 mg tablets. **Human:** 1 & 2 mg/mL injection; 10 mg/mL nasal spray.

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

- ▶ Opiate analgesic used for short-term pain relief, sedative, or cough suppressant (dogs). Given either by injection or by mouth.
- ▶ Tablets may be given with or without food. If your animal vomits or acts sick after receiving butorphanol on an empty stomach, try giving the next dose with food or a small treat. If vomiting continues, contact your veterinarian.
- ▶ Sedation (sleepiness) is the most common side effect.
- ▶ Report any significant changes in behavior, appetite, or bowel function to your veterinarian.
- ▶ Controlled drug in USA. It is against federal law to use, give away, or sell this medication to others than for whom it was prescribed.

How is this medication useful?

Butorphanol is an opiate drug used as a cough suppressant in dogs and, in a variety of species, as a pain reliever. It is also used in combination with other drugs as a sedative or restraining agent. Sometimes butorphanol is used during chemotherapy to prevent chemotherapy-induced vomiting.

The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for use in dogs, cats, and horses (not for horses to be used for food) as a pain reliever and as a cough suppressant for dogs. The FDA allows veterinarians to prescribe and use 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 butorphanol, 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 drug 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:

- ▶ That are allergic to it.

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

- ▶ With lung disease. Rarely, butorphanol can depress breathing ability. The manufacturer recommends that butorphanol NOT be used in patients with lung diseases that produce a lot of mucus because it can prevent the coughing up of mucus.
- ▶ Who are pregnant. Butorphanol does not appear to have a significantly large risk for causing birth defects, but the manufacturer warns not to use during pregnancy.
- ▶ Who are old, weak, or frail.
- ▶ With hypothyroidism, severe renal (kidney) disease, or adrenocortical insufficiency (Addison's disease).
- ▶ With head trauma or other serious central nervous system conditions (eg, coma).
- ▶ With heartworm disease.
- ▶ With liver disease. The manufacturer does not recommend use in dogs with a history of liver disease.
- ▶ Who may have a certain genetic mutation (*ABCB1-1Δ* also called *MDR1*) until they are tested. This mutation is most commonly found in "white feet" breeds: collies, Australian shepherds, Shetland sheepdogs (Shelties), long-haired whippets. Dogs with this mutation may be overly sensitive to the drug and may require much lower doses.
- ▶ Who are turtles or tortoises. In these species, butorphanol does not appear to provide good pain relief and can cause respiratory depression.

If your animal matches any of these concerns, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks of using the medication versus the benefits that it might have.

What are the side effects of this medication?

Side effects that usually are not serious include:

- ▶ Dogs, Cats: Sedation (sleepiness, drowsiness) is the most common; however, some animals may become overly excited with this drug.
- ▶ Dogs, Cats: Gastrointestinal effects (decreased appetite, vomiting, constipation, or diarrhea [rare]) can be seen.
- ▶ Horses: Ataxia (unsteadiness) and sedation (sleepiness) can occur soon after a dose. If doses are high, this can be followed by CNS excitement (tossing and jerking of head, greater desire to move, and exaggerated responses to loud noises).

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:

- ▶ Respiratory depression (rare; troubled breathing, inability to wake your animal up).
- ▶ Horses: Higher doses can cause the eyes to move back and forth (nystagmus), salivation, seizures, and a high body temperature (hyperthermia).
- ▶ Horses: Gastrointestinal effects. Butorphanol can reduce or stop normal intestinal movement. This effect is not common, but horses can exhibit signs of colic (rolling, repeatedly looking back the abdomen, kicking at the abdomen).

Contact your veterinarian immediately if you see any of these signs.

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: 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.

- ▶ Butorphanol can be given either as an oral tablet or injection. This drug comes in many different sized tablets and strengths for injection. Make sure that you are using the correct amount as prescribed by your veterinarian.
- ▶ Tablets may be given either with food or on an empty stomach. If your animal 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.
- ▶ If your veterinarian has instructed you to give this medication by injection in the muscle or under the skin (subcutaneously), be sure you understand the proper places and technique to inject it.
- ▶ If you are giving these shots at home, place used needles and syringes in a sharps disposal container immediately after they have been used. Do not reuse needles and syringes. Your veterinarian or pharmacist will help you obtain the sharps containers. Be careful not to accidentally stick yourself; do not attempt to disconnect the needle from the syringe. Keep containers out of reach of children and pets. Once the containers are about ¾ full, dispose of containers according to your community guidelines. Check with your local trash removal services or health department (listed online and in the city or county government [blue] pages in your phone book) to see which disposal methods are available in your area.
- ▶ If you have difficulty getting your animal to take the medicine, 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 the 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 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 tablets in the original prescription bottle or an approved dosage reminder container (ie, pill minder) at room temperature out of bright light.
- ▶ Do not allow the injection liquid to freeze.
- ▶ 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?

- ▶ Butorphanol is a controlled substance and should not be given to anyone other than the animal for whom it was prescribed. Prescriptions can only be refilled up to 5 times within 6 months of the original prescription date.
- ▶ Butorphanol may partially reverse the effects of other pain relievers and tranquilizers. Don't give other drugs for pain along with butorphanol without first talking with your veterinarian.
- ▶ 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.