

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]

Interferon, Alfa

(in-ter-**feer**-on **al**-fah)

Description: Immunomodulator; Antiviral Agent

Other Names for this Medication: Roferon-A®, Intron-A®

Common Dosage Forms: Compounded from human injectable dosage forms for oral use.

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

- ▶ Compounded liquid given orally (by mouth) or inside the cheek (buccally). Best not to mix with food. 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.
- ▶ Usually tolerated well.

How is this medication useful?

Interferon alfa (human recombinant) is used to treat certain viral infections (eg, feline immunodeficiency virus, papillomatosis) or to stimulate the immune system when it is not working well. 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 this drug, 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.

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 short-lived, meaning they will stop working within 24 hours, 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:

- ▶ That are allergic to it.
- ▶ That require immediate vaccination.

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

- ▶ That are pregnant or nursing.

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?

There is limited experience using this drug orally in dogs and cats, but it seems to be tolerated well.

Side effects that usually are not serious include:

- ▶ Vomiting, reduced appetite.

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

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

Oral overdoses of this medication are not likely to cause any side effects since little, if any, of the drug is absorbed into the blood. However, if you witness or suspect an overdose and your animal is showing abnormal symptoms, 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.

- ▶ The drug is best given without food. If your animal vomits or acts sick after getting it on an empty stomach, give with small amount of food or small treat to see if this helps. If vomiting continues, contact your veterinarian.
- ▶ Compounded 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 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, 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?

- ▶ This medication will be made (compounded) into a liquid by your veterinarian or pharmacist. Follow the storage recommendations and expiration date for the product. It is usually kept refrigerated. Do not use after the expiration date.
- ▶ Keep away from 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?

- ▶ Because interferon may prevent vaccines from being effective, do not have your animal vaccinated while getting this drug unless your veterinarian has instructed you to do so.
- ▶ 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.

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[Content to be provided by prescribing veterinarian]

Interferon Alpha, Ophthalmic

(*in-ter-feer-on al-fa*)

Description: Immunomodulator Agent

Other Names for this Medication: Intron®

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: None. **Human:** None for the eye. Interferon alpha solutions for the eye must be compounded by a qualified compounding pharmacist.

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 for cancers on the surface of the eye.
- ▶ May weaken the immune system.
- ▶ Must be made (compounded) by a qualified professional.
- ▶ **Because this drug has a higher risk for causing birth defects, pregnant women should avoid handling it.**

How is this medication useful?

Interferon alpha is useful for treating pre-cancerous growths and cancers of the eye such as squamous cell carcinoma. The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for use in humans but it is not available for use in the eye; it must be prepared by a compounding pharmacist. The FDA allows veterinarians to prescribe products containing this drug for 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 other eye medications, 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.

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 short-lived, meaning they will stop working within 24 hours.

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 pregnant or nursing.

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

- ▶ Animals that have weak immune systems.
- ▶ Animals with blood disorders.

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

What are the side effects of this medication?

Side effects that usually are not serious include:

- ▶ Mild burning, stinging, irritation, or redness of the eyes.

If any of these signs are severe, worsen, or continue to be a problem, contact your veterinarian.

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

- ▶ Difficulty breathing or swelling of the throat may indicate a severe allergic reaction to this drug.
- ▶ Behavior change, especially aggression.
- ▶ Diarrhea or loss of appetite.
- ▶ Mouth sores.
- ▶ Weakness and tiredness.

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?

When used as an eye medication overdoses are unlikely, but side effects or toxic effects could occur if your animal eats the medication. If this happens 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 may be 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.

- ▶ Wash your hands before administering this medication.
- ▶ Do not touch the dropper tip or allow it to touch your animal's eye or any other surface to prevent contamination.
- ▶ If any residue is left on your animal's face after giving the eye drops, gently wipe it off with a damp cloth or tissue.
- ▶ If you are administering more than one eye medication to your animal, wait 5 minutes between each medication before giving the next one. Use eye drops before eye ointments to allow the drops to absorb into the eye.
- ▶ If you are using this medication as an eye solution for your horse, your veterinarian may have implanted a special eye catheter (subpalpebral lavage or SPL catheter). Use this catheter exactly as your veterinarian has prescribed and only use air to flush the medications to the eye after injecting into the catheter.
- ▶ If you are having difficulty applying the medication or your animal does not accept the treatment, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist for tips to help with administration and reducing the stress of medication time.
- ▶ This medication can be used for various lengths of time, so be sure you understand how long your veterinarian wants you to continue using it. It usually is given several times daily for a few days followed by a rest period for several more days to weeks. You may need to get prescription refills before the therapy will be complete.

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?

- ▶ 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 animals?

Because this drug has a higher risk for causing birth defects, pregnant women should avoid handling it. If this is not possible, it is strongly advised that disposable gloves be worn while handling this medication. Once gloves are used, they should be disposed in the trash.

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.

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