

## 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]

## Dextromethorphan

(dex-troe-meth-or-fan)

### Description:

Reduce compulsive or self-injurious behavior

### Other Names for this Medication:

Delsym<sup>®</sup>, Robitussin<sup>®</sup>

### Common Dosage Forms:

**Veterinary:** None. **Human:** many trade names and combination products available over the counter.

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

- ▶ Used to manage self-injurious or compulsive behaviors dogs, cats, and horses.
- ▶ Usually not effective as a cough suppressant for dogs.
- ▶ Be sure to tell your veterinarian about any medications your animal is taking, including flea and tick collars, as there may be serious drug interactions.
- ▶ Upset stomach, lethargy, difficulty walking are most likely side effect(s); some agitation (anxious, nervous, upset, unable to relax) may occur particularly early in treatment or with high doses; 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?

Dextromethorphan may be useful in reducing self-injurious (eg, scratching, licking) or compulsive (eg, circling, cribbing) behaviors dogs, cats, or horses. The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for use as a cough suppressant in humans, but it is not officially approved for use in animals and is not believed to be effective in reducing cough 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 dextromethorphan, so be sure to tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including vitamins, supplements, or herbal therapies) you give your animal now or within the past few weeks, 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 should help your animal feel better within 1 to 2 hours. Your animal's clinical signs should improve after that time. 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 patients:

- ▶ That are allergic to it or drugs like it.

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

- ▶ With impaired liver function.
- ▶ That are currently taking, or recently have taken, medications or medicated collars containing monoamine oxidase inhibitors (eg, amitraz, selegiline).
- ▶ With respiratory problems: Dextromethorphan is not believed to be an effective cough suppressant in dogs.

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?**

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

- ▶ Agitation (eg, anxious, nervous, unable to relax)
- ▶ Upset stomach (eg, poor appetite, vomiting)
- ▶ Soft stools and diarrhea
- ▶ Low energy level

You don't have to be overly concerned if you see any of these signs 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:***

- ▶ Extreme agitation or nervousness
- ▶ Rapid or irregular heartbeat; collapse
- ▶ Muscle rigidity, difficulty walking, tremors or seizures
- ▶ Abnormal eye movements

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

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

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.

### 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.

- ▶ Dextromethorphan may be given with or without 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.
- ▶ 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 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?

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.**

#### Special Instructions

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