British Equine Veterinary Association

Client Information Leaflet

Metronidazole

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- **Keep this leaflet safe, as you may need to refer to it again.**
- **Please ask your vet if you have any further questions.**
- **This medicine has been prescribed for *your* horse ONLY. Do not take it yourself or give it to another person or any other animal; it may harm them even if their symptoms appear to be the same and could result in inadvertent contravention of Horse Passport legislation**

This medicine has been prescribed or given for you horses or donkey. The drug is called Metronidazole and is usually sold under this name. It may be administered intravenously by your veterinary surgeon or by mouth. Metronidazole is specifically prohibited from use in food producing animals of any species and your horses passport must be signed to permanently exclude it from the human food chain.

What is Metronidazole? Metronidazole is an antibiotic medicine that targets specific bacteria that survive in areas with no air. It is often used along side other antibiotic agents.

Why has my horse been prescribed metronidazole? Metronidazole is used to treat bacterial infections of the skin, teeth, abdomen or thorax.

How should I store and handle metronidazole? **For safety, all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.** There are no special storage requirements. Wash hands well after handling or wear gloves when administering this medicine.

What should I do if I run out of metronidazole? Usually your vet will dispense the correct amount of the product. If you run out, you should contact your veterinary surgeon to complete the course as soon as possible.

What should I do if I accidentally overdose my horse? Contact your vet, usually a one off high dose is not harmful, but you should discuss this in more details

What should I do if I miss a dose? If a dose is missed just give the next dose at the normal time. **DO NOT** give a double dose to make up for the missed dose.

If my horse is better what should I do with the remaining medicine? As with all antibiotics it is important that the full course of antibiotics is completed. Stopping early may leave some bacteria present at the site of infection that will regrow, leading to recurrence of disease that may be less susceptible (resistant) to this or other antibiotics.

If my horse is not improving what should I do? Contact your veterinary surgeon who will review whether this is the correct drug for your horse.

Can my horse take metronidazole along with other medicines? Tell your vet if you are giving your horse any other medicines.

What do I need to record in my horse's passport? This medicine is PROHIBITED for use in horses intended for human consumption. You must sign section IX of your horse's passport to permanently exclude it from the human food chain.

What are the possible side effects of metronidazole in my horse? Some horses will go off their food, this can often be managed by syringing the product directly into the horses mouth, rather than mixing in feed. Refrigerating the medicine may improve palatability. If you horse stops eating completely or becomes depressed you should **contact vet immediately and stop administering the product.**

Occasionally horses will develop diarrhoea. This can occur with ANY antibiotic and is not unique to metronidazole. If this occurs you should **contact your vet immediately and stop administering the product**.

What should I do if a person accidentally takes this medicine?
If a person accidentally takes this medicine you should contact NHS direct (telephone 111) or take the person to a local hospital, taking this leaflet and the package with you.

The prescribing cascade: This medicine is authorised for use in human patients or other animal species and is used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. The medicine is not authorised by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), for use in horses. Your vet can explain the 'prescribing cascade' in further detail to you and also explain why they are prescribing this drug for your pet. If you do not agree to the use of this medicine in your horse you should discuss this with your veterinary surgeon.

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