

Praziquantel

What is praziquantel?

Praziquantel (brand names: Droncit®, Drontal®, Biltricide®, Bio-Cest®, Cercon®, Cesol®, Cestox®, Cisticid®, ComboCare®, Cysticide®, Ehlopen®, Equimax®, Extiser Q®, Mycotricide®, Opticide®, Quest Plus®, Praquantel®, Prasikon®, Prazite®, Prozitel®, Sincerck®, Teniken®, Virbantel®, Waycital®, or Zifartel®, and Zimecterin Gold Paste ®) is an antiparasitic dewormer used to treat a variety of parasite infections, most commonly tapeworms. Praziquantel is also commonly used in combination with other antiparasitic medications.

Its use in cats, dogs, small mammals, birds, reptiles, and large animals to treat certain parasites is **'off label'** or **'extra label'**. Many drugs are commonly prescribed for off label use in veterinary medicine. In these instances, follow your veterinarian's directions and cautions very carefully as their direction may be significantly different from those on the label.

How is praziquantel given?

Praziquantel is given by mouth in the form of a tablet. It can be given with or without food, but your pet should not be fasted when giving this medication. The tablet can be crushed and mixed with food, but you must ensure that your pet swallows the entire dose. If your pet vomits shortly after dosing, call your veterinarian for instructions. It can also be given by injection in the hospital or clinic setting.

This medication should take effect within 1 to 2 hours; however, effects may not be noted outwardly and therefore laboratory tests may need to be done to evaluate this medication's effectiveness.

What if I miss giving my pet the medication?

Give the missed dose as soon as you remember, and then wait the recommended amount of time between doses. Never give your pet two doses at once or give extra doses.

Are there any potential side effects?

Side effects are uncommon with the tablets but may include lack of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, or tiredness in dogs. In cats, side effects are very rare, but may include drooling or diarrhea. Side effects after the injection include pain at the injection site, vomiting, diarrhea, sleepiness, drooling, decreased appetite, or staggering while walking.

This moderate-acting medication should stop working in a few days, although effects can be longer in pets with liver or kidney disease.

Are there any risk factors for this medication?

Praziquantel should not be used in pets that are allergic to it, in puppies less than 3 weeks old, or kittens less than 6 weeks old. Its use in pregnant pets is likely safe when using products containing only praziquantel, but caution should be taken in lactating pets. If praziquantel is given, the mother should not nurse for four days following the dose.

Are there any drug interactions I should be aware of?

The following medications should be used with caution when given with praziquantel: albendazole, cimetidine, CYP3A4 inducers, ketoconazole, itraconazole, or oxamniquine.

Be sure to tell your veterinarian about any medications (**including vitamins, supplements, or herbal therapies**) that your pet is taking.

Is there any monitoring that needs to be done with this medication?

There is no specific monitoring that needs to be done while your pet is taking this medication. Your veterinarian may monitor your pet to be sure that the medication is working by performing fecal examinations. Dead worms are frequently digested and therefore will not always be visual in the feces.

How do I store praziquantel?

Store tablets at room temperature, protected from light, in a tight container.

What should I do in case of emergency?

If you suspect an overdose or an adverse reaction to the medication, call your veterinary office immediately. If they are not available, follow their directions in contacting an emergency facility.

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