

Buprenorphine

Buprenex® is another name for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?

- Buprenorphine is used as a pain medication for dogs and cats.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?

- Buprenorphine must be eliminated by the kidneys and should be used carefully in animals with severe kidney disease.
- The liver is also responsible for removing buprenorphine from the body and this drug should be used carefully in animals with severe liver disease.
- Buprenorphine can depress breathing ability and should be used very carefully in animals that have lung injury or severe lung disease.
- Certain flea collars and dips containing amitraz (an MAO inhibitor) should not be worn or used within 14 days of buprenorphine as this combination may cause a dangerous rise in body temperature and blood pressure. Aged cheese can also cause this effect, so make sure that your pets do not get into any aged cheese while on this drug.
- Other pain relievers may accentuate the side effects of buprenorphine. Do not administer any other pain relievers to your pet without the recommendation from your veterinarian.
- If your animal has any of the above conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks of using the medication versus the benefits that it might have.

What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?

- Sedation is the most commonly experienced side effect.
- Rarely, depression of breathing to the point of respiratory distress has occurred.

How Should It Be Given?

- Buprenorphine injection is usually given to cats under the tongue or just inside the cheek pouch up to three times daily as needed for pain. The medication should be squirted just under the cat's tongue or in the cheek pouch for maximal effect and will not work as well if the dose is swallowed. The doses are very small for this potent drug, so be sure that you are giving the exact amount that your veterinarian has prescribed.
- The successful outcome of your animal's treatment with this medication depends upon your commitment and ability to administer it exactly as the veterinarian has prescribed. Please do not skip doses or stop giving the medication. If you have difficulty giving doses consult your veterinarian or pharmacist who can offer administration techniques or change the dosage form to a type of medication that may be more acceptable to you and your animal.
- If you miss a dose of this medication you should give it as soon as you remember it, but if it is within a few hours of the regularly scheduled dose, wait and give it at the regular time. Do not double a dose without instructions to do so from your veterinarian, as this can be toxic to your pet.
- Some other drugs can interact with this medication so tell your veterinarian about any drugs or foods that you currently give your animal. Do not give new foods or medications without first asking your veterinarian.
- Dogs and Cats: Buprenorphine is usually given orally to dogs and cats up to three to four times daily for relief of pain. Do not give your pet aged cheese or use tick collars while on this drug.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

- Buprenorphine should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets.
- Buprenorphine 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.

References:

Plumb's Veterinary Drug Handbook