

DOCP (desoxycorticosterone pivalate)

Percorten® is another name for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?

- DOCP is a medication that is used to treat low adrenal function in dogs, also known as Addison's disease. It is used to treat cats with the same disease, in an off-label manner. DOCP is sometimes prescribed along with very low doses of prednisone for this condition.

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

- The drug is labeled as contraindicated in dogs suffering from congestive heart failure, severe renal disease, or edema.
- Because some animals may be more (or less) sensitive to the effects of the drug, "cookbook" dosing without ongoing monitoring is inappropriate. Regular blood tests are crucial to keeping your pet with Addison's disease well. All animals with Addison's disease should receive additional prednisone during periods of stress or acute illness, and owners of pets with Addison's disease should always have some on hand.
- Do not administer DOCP IV; acute collapse and shock may result.

What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?

- Occasionally, irritation at the site of injection may occur.
- Reported adverse effects include (in decreasing frequency): depression/lethargy, vomiting, poor appetite, increased water intake, increased urination, diarrhea, swelling of the face and muzzle, weakness, hives and anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction).
- Anemia has been reported following DOCP administration.
- DOCP is safe for the puppies when given to a nursing mother.

How Should It Be Given?

- DOCP is given by injection into the muscle, every 21-30 days.
- 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 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.
- The following drug interactions have either been reported:
 - **Amphotericin B:** Patients may develop low potassium.
 - **Aspirin:** DOCP may reduce aspirin levels, making it less effective.
 - **Digoxin:** Because DOCP may cause low potassium, it should be used with caution and increased monitoring in patients receiving digitalis.
 - **Insulin:** DOCP could increase the insulin requirements of diabetic patients.
 - **Potassium-Depleting Diuretics** (e.g., **furosemide, thiazides**): Patients may develop low potassium; as diuretics can cause a loss of sodium, they may counteract the effects DOCP.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

- Treatment for Addison's disease is lifelong, and life threatening complications can occur if you stop giving this medicine.

References:

Plumb's Veterinary Drug Handbook