

Glipizide

Glucotrol® is another name for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?

- Glipizide is used to decrease blood sugar levels in some diabetic cats.

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

- Glipizide should be used very carefully in animals with untreated diseases of the pituitary gland or adrenal gland. It is not strong enough to be considered effective for diabetic emergencies like diabetic coma, acidosis or ketosis.
- Glipizide has caused death to the fetuses of rats and should probably not be used in pregnant animals. It is not known if glipizide enters the milk so it should be used with extreme caution in nursing animals.
- Glipizide is not effective in treating cats that have demonstrated a long term dependence on insulin.
- Several drugs interact with glipizide and may either increase blood sugar or excessively lower blood sugar. You should tell your veterinarian about any drugs that your cat is receiving.

What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?

- About 15% of cats will start vomiting when glipizide is started. This side effect usually improves after 2-5 days. If it does not improve, you should contact your veterinarian immediately.
- Initial doses of glipizide may cause your cat's blood sugar to drop too fast. If your cat shows signs of dangerously low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) such as weakness, wobbling, head tilting, shivering, sleepiness, glassy eyes, hunger or confusion, you should immediately administer 1 ml (approximately ¼ teaspoon) of Karo syrup to the gums and get your cat to a veterinarian for emergency treatment.
- Glipizide has caused toxicity to the liver in some cats. Your veterinarian will want to monitor your cat's liver function by doing bloodwork every 1-2 weeks for a few months. It is very important that you take your cat back to the veterinarian for these life-saving rechecks. If you notice that your cat's gums or eyes have a yellowish look to them, report this immediately to your veterinarian.
- Some cats may experience bone marrow suppression and anemia from glipizide.

How Should It Be Given?

- Glipizide should be given orally twice daily with meals.
- If your cat's blood sugar values do not improve after 1-2 months on glipizide, your veterinarian will recommend that you switch your pet to insulin injections.
- 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.
- Glipizide is not a cure for diabetes. You will need to give this medication for the rest of the animal's life, to prevent the life-threatening effects of high blood sugar.
- 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.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

- Glipizide should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets.
- Glipizide may not work forever in your cat. Many cats will stop responding to glipizide after several months and then must be treated with insulin injections.
- Glipizide is a sulfa drug and owners who are allergic to sulfas should wear gloves and exercise extreme caution while handling this medication.

References:

Plumb's Veterinary Drug Handbook