

Mexiletine

Mexiletine (brand name: Mexitil®) has been added to your pet's therapy for heart disease. This medication is used to treat irregular heart rhythms; specifically, ventricular premature complexes ("VPCs") or ventricular tachycardia. These irregular heart rhythms may occur in response to systemic problems such as trauma and may be treated for a short time until the problem is resolved, but also may occur as a result of cardiac muscle abnormalities such as cardiomyopathy or ischemic cardiac disease. Dogs with abnormal ventricular rhythms may faint, collapse or feel weak or lethargic.

Mexiletine is given three times per day, orally, with food. Although the medication does not need to be given at exact 8-hour intervals, you should try to give the medication within 2 hours of the scheduled time. If you forget to give the medication, give the dose as soon as you remember to do so and then return to your pet's normal medication schedule.

The most common side effect of mexiletine is a decrease in appetite or nausea, which can be reduced by making sure the medication is given with food. Some dogs may show lethargy or seem disoriented, but these effects are rare. If your dog does not feel well after taking mexiletine, please call your veterinarian or the consulting cardiologist to discuss dose adjustments or alternative medications.

It is likely that your pet will have a follow-up appointment scheduled with your veterinarian or the consulting cardiologist to check the efficacy of the medication to control the abnormal rhythm. Please contact your veterinarian if your pet develops problems with weakness, collapse, fainting or lethargy prior to your scheduled appointment.

The best way to treat problems due to cardiac medications is to prevent them or to "catch" the problem early. Please call your pet's consulting veterinarian or cardiologist if you have any questions or problems with your pet's cardiac therapy.