

# Maropitant Citrate

**BRAND NAME: CERENIA**

AVAILABLE IN  
16 mg, 24 mg, 60 mg, & 160 mg  
TABLETS  
and as INJECTABLE

## BACKGROUND

While strong nausea-controlling drugs in injectable form have been available for dogs for some time, oral medications have been lacking. Until recently, efforts were largely confined to the oral use of metoclopramide (which is rather short acting) and meclizine (which is not approved for use in dogs). In 2008, Pfizer released maropitant citrate, a strong anti-nauseal medication for dogs that could be given once a day.

Vomiting occurs when the vomit center of the brain stem is stimulated. It may be stimulated a number of ways: via the brain (as in motion sickness or through emotional input), via the chemoreceptor trigger zone in the brain stem (as when nauseating toxins are detected in the bloodstream), directly (as in dietary indiscretion), or a combination of any of the above. An important molecular step in initiating vomiting, involves the binding of a material called "substance P" to a structure called the "NK-1 receptor." This lock and key binding occurs in both the vomit center and in the chemoreceptor trigger zone. Maropitant citrate mimics the structure of substance P and binds the NK-1 receptors so that they cannot bind substance P thus making stimulation of the vomit center extremely difficult.

## HOW THIS MEDICATION IS USED

Maropitant is used once a day in dogs to control nausea. It can be given as a shot or as a tablet. The dose is higher for motion sickness versus for treatment of disease-related nausea. For the former, maropitant can be given two days in a row and for the latter for 5 days in a row.

## SIDE EFFECTS

Side effects are uncommon with the use of this medication but the most commonly noted side effects were: drooling, drowsiness, diarrhea, and appetite loss.

## INTERACTION WITH OTHER DRUGS

The risk of experiencing the above maropitant side effects is increased when maropitant is combined with other drugs that are highly blood protein bound in the circulation. Common drugs that meet this criterion are: Phenobarbital, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, and thyroid hormone supplements.

## CONCERNS AND CAUTIONS

- Note that the dosage recommended for a one time control of motion sickness is much higher than that for longer term nausea relief (as in the treatment of a disease).
- Maropitant has not been tested for safety in puppies under 16 weeks of age.
- Maropitant is for use in 5 day courses. After 5 days, the dog should come off maropitant for the 6th day but can start a new 5 day course on the 7th day. For motion sickness, maropitant can be given two days in a row.
- Do not give this medication wrapped in a treat that may upset your pet's stomach. Minimize fatty treats as they work against the effectiveness of the medication.
- Maropitant may not be appropriate for dogs with liver disease.
- Maropitant has not been evaluated in pregnant or nursing dogs and is not approved for use in the cat. Some feline studies have been performed and the drug has been used by many in the cat without adverse effect.



## Mar Vista Animal Medical Center

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Additional drug and general pet care information can be found on our world wide web site:

<http://www.marvistavet.com>