

Dextromethorphan (Benylin, Robitussin)

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Generic Name

Dextromethorphan

Brand Names

Benylin, Robitussin, St. Joseph Cough Suppressant for Children, Vicks Formula 44 Soothing Cough Relief

NOTE: Read all ingredients thoroughly, as some formulations of the product may not contain dextromethorphan and some forms may contain other ingredients which may be deadly to animals.

Type of Drug

Cough suppressant

Form and Storage

Tablet or liquid

Unless otherwise specified by the manufacturer, store at room temperature.

Indications for Use

Treatment of dry, nonproductive cough and chronic bronchitis.

General Information

Not FDA approved for use in animals, but it is an accepted practice to use dextromethorphan in specific cases. Available over the counter.

Dextromethorphan works by suppressing the cough center in the brain. It does not cause profound sedation like the narcotic cough suppressants can. Do NOT use cough suppressants in animals that have a productive, moist cough, as the body needs to be able to rid itself of the phlegm and other secretions in the lungs. Cough suppressants are most useful in dogs with a dry, hacking cough like [kennel cough](#) or a cough secondary to a [collapsing trachea](#). Cats with chronic bronchitis may benefit from a cough suppressant. Chronic coughing irritates the respiratory tract causing more coughing. The goal of the treatment would be to stop the coughing enough to allow the inflammation and irritation to decrease and stop the cycle.

Usual Dose and Administration

Dogs and Cats: 0.25-1 mg/pound by mouth every 8 hours.

Duration of treatment depends on reason for treatment and response to treatment.

Do NOT use products containing acetaminophen, caffeine, or alcohol, as these may be deadly to pets. Consult your veterinarian before using over the counter medications to make sure you have the right formulation.

Side Effects

May see nausea, vomiting, dizziness, or drowsiness.

Contraindications/Warnings

Do not use in animals hypersensitive (allergic) to it.

Do not use a cough suppressant without first contacting a veterinarian.

Do not use products containing acetaminophen, caffeine, alcohol, or other medications, as they may be deadly to pets.

Use cautiously in animals with allergies because in humans dextromethorphan has been associated with histamine release.

Do not use in pregnant or nursing animals.

Drug or Food Interactions

Do not use within 14 days of using monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs).

Do not use with other sedatives, narcotics, antihistamines, or central nervous system depressants as effects of the drugs would be increased.

No known food interactions.

Overdose/Toxicity

May see excitement, confusion, or decreased rate of breathing.

Summary

Dextromethorphan is used to treat chronic, dry cough in dogs and cats, under the direction of a veterinarian. Do NOT use for productive coughs. Do NOT use products which also contain acetaminophen, caffeine, or other additives. Contact your veterinarian if your pet experiences excitement, nausea, dizziness, drowsiness, or decreased rate of breathing while taking dextromethorphan.