

Piperazine (Pipa-Tabs, Sergeant's Worm Away)

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Generic Name

Piperazine

Brand Name

Anchor Piperazine Water Wormer, Happy Jack Kennel Wormer, Happy Jack Puppy Paste, Pipa-Tabs, Pipfuge, Purina Liquid Wormer, Sergeant's Worm-Away

Type of Drug

Anthelmintic/dewormer

Form and Storage

Tablet, capsule, oral solutions, powder, and paste
Store in tight, light resistant containers at room temperature.

Indications for Use

Treatment of 2 types of roundworms (ascarids) in dogs and cats.

General Information

FDA approved for use in veterinary medicine. Available over the counter and by prescription. Piperazine paralyzes the roundworm which is then passed, alive, out of the body with the feces. Roundworms are the intestinal parasite that look like spaghetti.

Usual Dose and Administration

Follow individual product information or contact your veterinarian as different products contain compounds which are made of different amounts of piperazine. Dogs and Cats: 20-50 mg of base/pound by mouth. Repeat in 10-14 days, and in severe cases, repeat in an additional 10-14 days. Retreatment is necessary as larval forms in the host's (pet's) tissues may not be affected by the drug. As the larvae migrate to the intestines and mature, the 2nd (and 3rd) dose will eliminate them. Puppies and kittens need to be tested and dewormed frequently according to a worming schedule, and as advised by your veterinarian.

Side Effects

Nausea, vomiting, and muscle tremors are usually associated with an overdose. May cause intestinal obstruction or rupture in treated animals with a large number of roundworms.

Contraindications/Warnings

Roundworms are zoonotic (people can be infected).

They are capable of causing visceral larval migrans or ocular larval migrans. See special note at end of piperazine information.

Follow directions on individual product as amounts of piperazine in products varies with the type of compound it contains.

Do not use on sick or debilitated animals without veterinarian approval.

Do not use in animals with liver or kidney disease.

If your pet has internal parasites, it is important to identify the type with a stool/fecal exam by your veterinarian to verify type of treatment needed, as different parasites are treated with different dewormers.

Drug and Food Interactions

Do not use with laxatives as these reduce the time the drug is in contact with the parasite and reduces the effectiveness.

Diarrhea will also decrease the time the medication is in contact with the parasites.

No known food interactions.

Overdoses/Toxicity

Signs include vomiting, weakness, difficulty breathing, twitching, loss of coordination (staggering), salivating/drooling, head

pressing, depression, paralysis, and death. Piperazine does have a wide margin of safety.

Special Note

Roundworms, hookworms, and tapeworms are zoonotic, meaning they can infect humans. Multiple species carry the roundworm parasite including dogs, cats, raccoons, and pigs. The adult roundworm living in an animal's intestine passes large numbers of eggs in the animal's feces/stool. These eggs contaminate the ground where the animal has defecated. Children who play in the area and do not wash their hands before eating or putting their hands in their mouth, or who eat dirt contaminated with the eggs are most at risk of becoming infected.

The ingested roundworm eggs hatch in the intestine, and the larvae then migrate throughout the body organs including the lungs, liver, eyes, and brain where they can produce the disease known as visceral larval migrans. (Ocular larval migrans if they migrate into the eye.)

The [raccoon roundworm](#) is especially harmful as signs progress rapidly and death may precede diagnosis. Clinical signs of infection from raccoon roundworm larvae have been similar to symptoms of rabies in various animal species and humans.

Prevention of roundworm infection in people includes annual stool tests/deworming of pets, child supervision, personal hygiene, washing root-type vegetables, covering sandboxes, gardening with gloves, cleaning up pet stool daily, and not allowing pets to lick hands and face.

Summary

Piperazine is an oral medication used to treat roundworm infestations. Dose varies with product used. Side effects are rare. Have regular fecal exams performed to identify which worms a pet is infected with. Elimination of parasites must also include sanitation and prevention measures to ensure the pet does not become reinfected.