Plumb's®
Drug Handouts

Prescription Label

Patient Name:
Species:
Drug Name & Strength:
Directions (amount to give how often & for how long):

Prescribing Veterinarian's Name & Contact Information:

Refills:

[Content to be provided by prescribing veterinarian]

Erythromycin, Ophthalmic

*(eh-**rith**-roe-**mye**-sin)*

Description:
Topical Antibiotic

Common Dosage Forms:
Veterinary: None. **Human:** 5 mg/g (0.5%) ophthalmic ointment.

Antimicrobial Classification:
Critically Important

This information sheet does not contain all available information for this medication and has not been reviewed by FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine. This sheet can help answer commonly asked questions but is not a substitute for medical advice. If you have other questions or need more information about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.

Key Information

- Topical antibiotic ointment to treat eye infections.
- Wait 5 minutes after applying this medicine before applying any other medications to the eye.
- Use proper administration techniques to avoid contamination of the medication. Keep cap tightly closed when not in use.
- Do not use on small mammals ('pocket pets') without veterinarian's approval.

How is this medication useful?

Erythromycin ophthalmic ointment is used to treat bacterial eye infections. The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for use in humans but has not approved it for use in animals. The FDA allows veterinarians to prescribe and use human products containing this drug in animals in certain situations. You and your veterinarian can discuss why this drug is the most appropriate choice.

What should I tell my veterinarian to see if this medication can be safely given?

Many things might affect how well this drug will work in your animal. Be sure to discuss the following with your veterinarian so together you can make the best treatment decisions.

- Other drugs can interact with this medication, so be sure to tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including other eye medications, vitamins, supplements, or herbal therapies) you give your animal, including the amount and time you give each.
- Tell your veterinarian about any conditions or diseases your animal may have now or has had in the past.
- If your animal has been treated for the same disease or condition in the past, tell your veterinarian about the treatment and how well it did or didn't work.

©2026 Educational Concepts, LLC, a division of Instinct

- If your animal is pregnant or nursing, talk to your veterinarian about the risks of using this drug.
- Tell your veterinarian and pharmacist about any medication side effects (including allergic reactions, lack of appetite, diarrhea, itching, hair loss) your animal has developed in the past.

How long until I will know if this medication is working, and how long will the effects of this medication last?

This medication should start having effects within 1 to 2 hours; however, you may not see the effects of this medication outwardly. Your animal should begin feeling better within 1 to 2 days. The effects of this medication are short-lived, meaning they will stop working within 24 hours.

When should this medication not be used or be used very carefully?

No drug is 100% safe in all patients, but your veterinarian will discuss with you any specific concerns about using this drug in your animal.

This drug **SHOULD NOT** be used in patients:

- That are allergic to it or drugs like it (eg azithromycin, clarithromycin, lincomycin).
- That are pocket pets (eg, rabbits, hamsters, chinchillas).

If your animal has any of these conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks versus the benefits.

What are the side effects of this medication?

Side effects that usually are not serious include:

- Mild burning, stinging, irritation, or redness of the eyes.

If any of these signs are severe, worsen, or continue to be a problem, contact your veterinarian.

Side effects that may be serious or indicate a serious problem:

- Difficulty breathing or swelling of the throat may indicate a severe allergic reaction to this drug.
- Severe diarrhea.

If you see any of these signs, contact your veterinarian immediately.

If my animal gets too much of this medication (an overdose), what should I do?

When used as an eye medication overdoses are unlikely, but side effects or toxic effects could occur if your animal eats the medication. If this happens contact your veterinarian or an animal poison control center for further advice. Animal poison control centers that are open 24 hours a day include **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center** (888-426-4435) and **Pet Poison HELPLINE** (855-764-7661); a consultation fee may be charged for these services.

How should this medication be given?

For this medication to work, give it exactly as your veterinarian has prescribed. It's a good idea to always check the prescription label to be sure you are giving the medicine correctly.

- Administer this drug to your animal's eye exactly as your veterinarian has prescribed.
- Wash your hands before administering this medication.
- Do not touch the tube tip or allow it to touch your animal's eye or any other surface to prevent contamination.
- If any residue is left on your animal's face after giving the eye drops, gently wipe it off with a damp cloth or tissue.
- If you are administering more than one eye medication to your animal, wait 5 minutes between each medication before giving the next one. Use eye drops before eye ointments to allow the drops to absorb into the eye.
- If you are having difficulty applying the medication or your animal does not accept the treatment, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist for tips to help with administration and reducing the stress of medication time.
- This medication can be given for various lengths of time. Be sure you understand how long your veterinarian wants you to continue giving this medication. Prescription refills may be necessary before the therapy will be complete. Before stopping this medication, talk to your veterinarian, as there may be important reasons to continue its use.

What should I do if I miss giving a dose of this medication?

If you miss a dose, give it when you remember, but if it is close to the time for the next dose, skip the dose you missed and give it at the next scheduled time. After that, return to the regular dosing schedule. Do not double-up or give extra doses.

How should I store this medication?

- Store this medication in the original container (ointment tube).
- If your veterinarian or pharmacist has made (compounded) a special formulation for your animal, follow the storage recommendations and expiration date for the product.
- Keep away from children and other animals.

©2026 Educational Concepts, LLC, a division of Instinct

Can handling this medication be hazardous to me, my family, or other animals?

There are no specific precautions required when handling this medication unless you are allergic to it or other drugs like it (eg azithromycin or clarithromycin), but it is always a good idea to wash your hands after handling any medication.

How should I dispose of this medication if I don't use it all?

- Do not flush this medication down the toilet or wash it down the sink. If a community drug "take-back" program is available, use this option. If there is no take-back program, mix the drug with coffee grounds or cat litter (to make it undesirable to children and animals and unrecognizable to people who might go through your trash), place the mixture in a sealable plastic bag to keep it from leaking out, and throw the bag out with the regular trash.
- Do not save leftover medication for future use or give it to others to use.

What other information is important for this medication?

Use of this drug may not be allowed in certain animal competitions. Check rules and regulations before entering your animal in a competition while this medication is being administered.

If you have any other questions about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.

©2026 Educational Concepts, LLC, a division of Instinct