Plumb's Drug Handouts

Levothyroxine

(*lee-voe-thye-**rox**-een*)

Key Information

- Used as a thyroid hormone supplement in animals that don't make enough thyroid hormone.
- May be given with or without food but should be given the same way every time.
- Dogs require much higher doses of levothyroxine than humans.
- Your veterinarian will need to monitor your animal during treatment with this medication.
- Side effects may include vomiting, diarrhea, itching, or lack of energy.
- Contact your veterinarian if you notice increased appetite, increased thirst, increased urination, excitability or nervousness, complete lack of appetite, or skin rashes.

Note: The purpose of this information sheet is to answer commonly asked questions. It does not contain all available information for this medication and is not a substitute for medical advice provided by your veterinary healthcare team.

Description	• Thyroid hormone • Available as tablets, capsules, and an oral solution
Other common names	*Levoxyl*, *Synthroid*, *ThyroKare*, *Thyro-Tabs Canine*, *Thyquidity*, *Tirosint*
Uses	FDA-approved uses in animals: • Thyroid hormone replacement in dogs with low thyroid function (*hypothyroidism*)
Before this medication is given	No medication is 100% safe in all patients. Discuss with your veterinarian: • Any other medications or supplements your animal is taking • Any conditions or diseases your animal currently has or has had in the past • Any side effects your animal has had to medications in the past • The risks of using this medication if your animal is pregnant or nursing
Warnings for animals	Do **not** use in animals: • That are allergic to this medication • With high thyroid hormone levels • With untreated low cortisol levels (*Addison disease*) Use with **caution** in animals: • With treated low cortisol levels (*Addison disease*) • With heart disease • With diabetes mellitus • That are elderly Certain medications are not allowed in some animal competitions. Check rules and regulations when your animal is taking a medication.
Warnings for humans	• Wash your hands after handling any medication.
How do I give this medication?	• May be given with or without food but should be given the same way every time. *Give exactly as your veterinarian has prescribed. Always follow the instructions on the prescription label.*
Side effects	Contact your veterinarian if you notice any of the following signs, as they may mean the dose is too high: • Increased appetite with weight loss • Increased thirst and need to urinate

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	• Excitability or nervousness • Panting Other possible side effects include: • Vomiting or diarrhea • Itching or scaly skin • Lack of energy • Ear infections Stop the medication and contact your veterinarian immediately if you notice any of these signs: • Complete loss of appetite • Skin rashes or other reactions

How will I know it's working?	• This medication needs to be given consistently for several weeks before it will reach full effect. However, side effects can occur right away.
	• You should see a gradual improvement in your animal's signs as the medication becomes fully effective.
	  - Your animal should have improved activity within the first 1 to 2 weeks of treatment.
	  - Weight loss should start to occur within 8 weeks of starting therapy.
	  - Hair coat may initially appear worse but should be improved after several months.
	  - Neurologic signs improve rapidly after treatment, but complete resolution may take 8 to 12 weeks.
	• Your veterinarian will need to run follow-up tests to determine how well your animal is tolerating this medication and evaluate how well it is working. Talk with your veterinarian about the specific timing of blood tests based on when you give the medication.
	Contact your veterinary clinic if your animal's signs worsen or do not improve.

How long will the medication effects last?	• The effects of this medication may last for a few days after the last dose.
How long do I give it for?	• This medication can be given for different lengths of time but is often a lifelong medication. Give it for as long as your veterinarian tells you. Make sure to refill the prescription to avoid interruptions in treatment.
Overdose	If you witness or suspect an overdose, call your veterinarian or an animal-specific poison control center (consultation fee applies): • **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center**: (888) 426-4435 • **Pet Poison Helpline**: (855) 764-7661 *Have the product or label with you if possible.*
Missed dose	In most cases, if you miss a dose: • Give it when you remember, then return to the regular dosing schedule. If it is close to the time for the next dose: • Skip the missed dose. • Give the next dose at the next scheduled time. • Continue the regular dosing schedule. *If you are unsure, call your veterinary clinic. Do not double-up or give extra doses.*
Storage	• Store in the original container at room temperature. • Protect from light and moisture. • Keep out of reach of children and animals.
Disposal	Do **not** flush this medication down the toilet or wash it down the sink. Options for disposing of unused or expired medications include:

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	• Drug take-back sites: This is preferred whenever possible. To find a site near you, contact your local law enforcement or waste management authorities. • Home disposal: Mix the medication in with coffee grounds or kitty litter, seal in a plastic bag, and throw away in the trash. *Do **not** save leftover medication or give it to others to use.*
Questions?	Talk to your veterinarian.

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