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What is this medication used for:

Sulfadimethoxine alone is used almost exclusively for the treatment of intestinal parasites known as coccidia. These parasites are single-celled organisms capable of causing intense diarrheas in their hosts.

Sulfadimethoxine is generally given once daily and can be given with or without food.

Interactions with other Drugs:

Antacids may interfere with oral absorption. In combination with trimethoprim or ormetoprim, the sulfa antibiotics produce what is called a sequential blockade, attacking folic acid synthesis in two locations of the enzyme sequence. This combination makes for an excellent broad-spectrum antibacterial product with a particularly good ability to penetrate into tissue that other antibiotics cannot.

Side effects of concern can be divided into two groups: those that are common and those that are potentially serious. Potentially serious side effects are generally rare (<4% incidence) and may be random (not related to how much medication is used).

Sulfadimethoxine can promote the potential for kidney disease when combined with cyclosporine. Further, cyclosporine levels may be decreased, so it may not work as well as it would have alone.

Common Side Effects:

The most common side effects are loss of appetite, vomiting, and diarrhea. These are usually minor and are generally helped by providing food with the medication.

The Doberman pinscher seems to be over-represented and complete recovery can be expected within one week of discontinuing the medication. The samoyed and miniature schnauzer breeds have also been considered over-represented.

Sulfa drugs of any kind can disrupt tear function. This typically occurs after long-term therapy(i.e., weeks to months) of use, but occasionally, certain individuals suffer from dry eyes after only one dose of sulfa. In most cases, tear function resumes normally after the drug is discontinued, but occasionally, the effect is long-term or permanent despite not taking the drug. If use is to continue for more than a week, tear production may require monitoring.

Doberman pinschers, samoyeds, and miniature schnauzers are considered sensitive to this medication.

Serious Side Effects:

Sulfa drugs have numerous potential side effects and though they may be rare, it is a good idea to become familiar with what to look for. The following syndromes can

occur in certain individuals. These syndromes mostly represent idiosyncratic reactions, which means their occurrence has nothing to do with the amount of drug given but instead is an unpredictable individual's sensitivity to any dose.

Inability to Produce Adequate Tears (occurs in about 15% of dogs on sulfamedications)

Joint Inflammation - A broad inflammatory syndrome has been observed in some individuals sensitive to sulfas. This syndrome has been formally studied and has been found to occur almost exclusively after a previous uneventful exposure to a sulfa drug and occurs 8-20 days after therapy has started.

Skin Rashes - Drug-related skin reactions do not have characteristic appearances; in fact, they can have any appearance. They do, however, begin around the start of treatment with the offending drug and vanish when the offending drug is stopped. Any drug of any kind can produce a drug reaction in the skin; a sulfa drug is somewhat over-represented in cases of skin-related drug eruptions.

Blood Dyscrasias is abnormal blood cells or proportions of different blood cells. Depending on which blood cells are affected, blood dyscrasias might lead to immune dysfunction, bleeding tendency, or other problems. With sulfas, loss of red blood cells, platelets, and white blood cells has been reported. This syndrome is typically part of the joint inflammation syndrome.

This medication can help cause urine-forming crystals or even stones. This is typically a problem with prolonged use or acidified urine.

Concerns and Cautions:

It has been recommended that this medication not be used in patients with liver or kidney disease.

Since the inability to produce adequate tears (dry eye) is a possible side effect of sulfa drugs, it is prudent not to use them in patients who already have this condition independently.

This medication is not considered safe during pregnancy.

As mentioned, the Doberman pinscher is predisposed to the immune-mediated side effects listed above. Sulfadimethoxine is best not used in this breed. The samoyed and miniature schnauzer have similar considerations.