

IVERMECTIN: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Ivermectin is one of the most well-established medications that continues to play an important role in treating certain parasitic infections. Ivermectin was originally discovered in the 1970s by a Japanese microbiologist, being isolated from soil samples containing *Streptomyces avermitilis*, a bacterium with potent antiparasitic properties. The compound was later developed into ivermectin, which has revolutionized the treatment of parasitic diseases worldwide. With its broadened uses and applications over the past several years, this medication has received unprecedented attention and controversy, despite it being recognized by the World Health Organization as an “essential drug.”

Patients and prescribers often ask about the differences between compounded and commercially available ivermectin. Commercial products, such as 3mg tablets and topical creams or lotions, are manufactured in standardized doses for the mass public. In contrast, compounded ivermectin is prepared by a licensed pharmacist for patients who require individualized dosing, altered dosage formulations, or topical variations not otherwise available. This compounding process ensures purity, accurate dosing, and avoids unnecessary additives which may cause side-effects in some people.

Ivermectin formulations

When recommending ivermectin, it is essential to choose only humangrade, prescription formulations. Compounded Ivermectin is available in both oral and topical formulations, each suited for specific conditions. Oral ivermectin is commonly used for systemic parasitic infections such as strongyloidiasis and onchocerciasis (river blindness), while ivermectin is included in our proprietary topical formulations used to address lice, scabies, rosacea, eczema and psoriasis.

Veterinary products or medications purchased overseas and online may contain harmful fillers, unpredictable strengths, or even counterfeit substances. We've been informed of some strange and unexpected side-effects. Human-grade compounded ivermectin however, is tailored specifically for safe human use, and prescribing oversight ensures the correct dose and monitoring for side effects. In general, oral ivermectin is best for systemic infections, while topical formulations are preferred for skin-based conditions. Much of the controversy surrounding the use of ivermectin in humans is related to humans using a “horse dewormer”, which has overlapped with the conversation about using ivermectin for unapproved uses. Due to the lack of testing of veterinary formulations in

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Physicians Preference Pharmacy is a Houston-based, PCAB-accredited compounding pharmacy serving physicians and patients since 2001. We are licensed to work with and ship to doctors and patients in 49 states (excludes AL). Our standards are more stringent than those of the United States Pharmacopeia (USP). Physicians Preference Pharmacy ranks first in Houston for the number of samples sent for potency testing and in the top 8% of pharmacies nationwide.

humans, the safety of these products in humans is not known. Never use medications intended for animals on yourself or other people.

Side-Effects

Most people tolerate ivermectin exceptionally well. Ivermectin has a notably strong safety profile with the LD50 in mice and monkeys amounting to an oral dose about 125 times the typical dose in humans. Oral therapy may sometimes cause nausea, dizziness, mild headaches, or stomach upset, while topical therapy may cause redness, itching, or dryness at the application site. Side-effects of commercially available ivermectin are generally due to bothersome inactive ingredients such as starch or Butylated Hydroxyanisole (BHA), a synthetic preservative found in many manufactured food, drug and cosmetic products. This is why our compounded ivermectin is free of both starch and BHA fillers. Additionally, remember that the intention of dosing ivermectin is to treat parasitic infection. As parasites die off, symptoms of fatigue and skin rashes may occur initially as the body attempts to rid the parasite.

Prescription required?

Much of the reason why humans have turned to use veterinary ivermectin is due to the lack of patient access and the unwillingness of many physicians to prescribe ivermectin for their patients. Additionally, much scrutiny has come upon pharmacists working for retail chain pharmacies, who were instructed by corporate not to dispense ivermectin for many uses. Recently, some states including Louisiana, Arkansas, Idaho, and Tennessee have passed legislation allowing

commercially available 3mg ivermectin tablets to be dispensed by pharmacists without a prescription. As pharmacists who specialize in customizing ivermectin dosing for each individual patient, we believe that the expanded access of making this drug available over-the-counter also increases the risk of adverse events, self-dosing, and drug-drug interactions.

Dosing and Pricing

While dosing varies from indication to indication, dosing for parasite treatment in humans often ranges from 0.15-0.2 mg/kg per day for 1-2 days, equating to roughly 15 mg daily for a 155 lb individual. We frequently see ivermectin paired with compounded mebendazole or alternated with ivermectin to address a broader range of parasitic infections. Ask us about our compounded mebendazole too!

In many other countries, such as Mexico for example, it is common to perform a routine "parasite sweep" to address parasitic exposure that may result from untreated water, exposure to pets, or crowded households. This usually takes place two to four times per year. Although this is common practice in some underdeveloped countries, we also believe this should be considered in developed countries as well. Depending on the patient's weight, we commonly see 12-15 mg ivermectin dosed daily for one week, repeated once per quarter. However, if evidence of parasites is expected or observed during the first "sweep", repeat this course in 3 weeks from the original treatment, repeating a one week regimen again once each quarter.

While 3 mg ivermectin may be less expensive per tablet, the price comparison between ivermectin available commercially, over-the-counter, or compounded by prescription is not so straightforward. To make an appropriate comparison of cost, the cost of the entire dose must be calculated. For example, a patient may need to take 5 or 10 tablets of over-the-counter 3mg ivermectin, whereas we can consolidate the entire dose into just one capsule for your patients.

How our formulation is different

At Physicians Preference Pharmacy, we offer a wide range of oral ivermectin capsule strengths, as high as your patient needs. Our ivermectin formulations are free of bothersome additives such as BHA and starch, ensuring a potent and clean product for your patients. Our oral formulations are compounded in 3mg increments and we offer several proprietary formulations to address treatment refractory skin conditions.

In summary, ivermectin remains a safe and effective medication when prescribed appropriately. Patients should always use human-grade, medically supervised formulations, and prescribers should stay informed about evolving legislation and continue to guide patients with evidence-based recommendations.

Please give us a call today at **281-828-9088** to speak with any pharmacist about our ivermectin formulations. It would be our privilege to serve you!