

## Banamine

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Banamine is a fantastic drug, especially for treating horses with colic. Many horse owners have it in their first aid kits dispensed by their veterinarians to use in case of an emergency, but there is increasing concern that it is being used inappropriately. The biggest reason for inappropriate use is that some horse owners don't understand how it works and what the side-effects are when it is not used properly.

Banamine is the trade name for the drug flunixin meglumine. It is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication, which means it works on components of the inflammatory cascade to decrease the signs and symptoms associated with inflammation. Basically, it is an ibuprofen-type drug. So although it is commonly used for treatment of colic signs, it can be used for treating all types of inflammation for example, swelling associated with trauma, pain from lameness or injury, and fevers from illness. It is commonly used for colic as it has very good pain-relieving effects for treatment of the signs associated with abdominal pain. However, there are some very important things to know about Banamine if you have it in your tack box to use when needed. These include dose, frequency, toxicity, and side-effects.

More is not better when it comes to giving your horse Banamine, no matter the reason. This applies to both amount and frequency. The dose for flunixin meglumine is 2.2 mg/lb. That means a 1000 pound horse should not get more than 500mg of Banamine at a time. Therefore it is very important that you understand the concentration you have so that you know to give the right dose. Most of the paste formulations are conveniently labeled with the administration amount right on the tube, based on your horse's weight. If the formulation you have does not, you need to work with your veterinarian to be sure you know how to calculate the precise dosage to give the horse based on the horse's weight. Banamine should

never be more frequently than every 12 hours, unless supervised directly by a veterinarian. Flunixin's duration of action is 12 hours, and to avoid toxicity and side-effects it should not be given more frequently. Too frequent of dosing is the most common mistake made by horse owners, especially when a horse is showing signs of colic. If a horse is still painful after a dose of Banamine, an additional dose will not be effective and will just increase chances of toxicity. So if you have given Banamine and your horse is still painful or becomes painful within 12 hours of the dose, you should contact your veterinarian before giving any further doses.

Like most medications Banamine can be toxic or have side-effects. Toxicity can occur when given over a long period of time, when too much is given (overdose), or given too frequently. The main complications associated with toxicity are generally with the kidneys and gastro-intestinal tract. Kidney failure can be associated with Banamine toxicity. Horses are more at risk when dehydrated, which often happens with colic. This medication can also cause gastro-intestinal ulceration, so should be used with caution in horses that are prone to ulcers. Another complication that can be encountered is when the intra-venous (IV) formulation is given in the muscle (IM). Though it can be given in the muscle there is a significantly increased risk of the development of clostridial myositis when giving Banamine IM, a potentially fatal disease. So any horse given IM Banamine should have the area monitored closely for any swelling or heat. It is best just to avoid giving it in the muscle altogether and to just give it orally or IV, if proficient in IV injections. Despite concerns with toxicity and side-effects, Banamine is a great medication, when used appropriately. If you ever have any questions or concerns in regards to toxicity, side-effects, dose (amount and frequency) or when to give it, you should consult with your veterinarian.

Contact Brandon Equine Medical Center at 813-643-7177 or email [info@brandonequine.com](mailto:info@brandonequine.com) with any questions regarding this topic.

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