



## Health Alert Network Message 21-63: Do Not Use Ivermectin to Treat or Prevent COVID-19

**Origination Date:**  
*August 27, 2021*

**Revision Dates (List All Revision Dates):**

This message is from Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) Office of Public Health (OPH) regarding **Ivermectin and its use**. Please read the message below. Please share and distribute with relevant stakeholders and partners through your own distribution channels.

### **Do Not Use Ivermectin to Treat or Prevent COVID-19**

There is a growing interest in ivermectin to treat humans with COVID-19. Ivermectin is commonly used in the U.S. to treat or prevent parasites in animals. There are some parasitic indications in humans as well. The FDA has received multiple reports of patients who have required medical support and been hospitalized after self-medicating with ivermectin intended for horses. Using any treatment for COVID-19 that is not approved or authorized by the FDA, unless part of a clinical trial, can cause serious harm.

#### **Here's What You Need to Know about Ivermectin**

- FDA has not approved or authorized ivermectin for use in treating or preventing COVID-19 in humans. Ivermectin tablets are approved at very specific doses for some parasitic worms, and there are topical (on the skin) formulations for head lice and skin conditions like rosacea. Ivermectin is not an anti-viral (a drug for treating viruses).
- Taking large doses of this drug is dangerous and can cause serious harm.
- If you have a prescription for ivermectin for an FDA-approved use, get it from a legitimate source and take it exactly as prescribed for the condition it was prescribed for.
- Never use medications intended for animals on yourself. Ivermectin preparations for animals are very different from those approved for humans.

#### **What is Ivermectin and How is it Used?**

Ivermectin tablets are approved by the FDA to treat people with intestinal strongyloidiasis and onchocerciasis, two conditions caused by parasitic worms. In addition, some topical forms of ivermectin are approved to treat external parasites like head lice and for skin conditions such as rosacea. Do not prescribe or recommend ivermectin for COVID-19 treatment or prevention.

Some forms of ivermectin are used in animals to prevent heartworm disease and certain internal and external parasites. It is important to note that these products are different from the ones for people, and safe when used as prescribed for animals, only.

Animal drugs are often highly concentrated because they are used for large animals like horses and cows, which can weigh a lot more than we do. Such high doses can be highly toxic in humans.

Moreover, FDA reviews drugs not just for safety and effectiveness of the active ingredients, but also for the inactive ingredients. Many inactive ingredients found in animal products are not evaluated for use in people. Or they are included in much greater quantity than those used in people. In some cases, we do not know how those inactive ingredients will affect how ivermectin is absorbed in the human body.

**Overdose:**

Overdose on ivermectin can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, hypotension, allergic reactions (itching and hives), dizziness, ataxia, seizures, coma and even death.

FDA sources:

<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/why-you-should-not-use-ivermectin-treat-or-prevent-covid-19>

<https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/product-safety-information/faq-covid-19-and-ivermectin-intended-animals>