

the dog culture magazine

THE BARK



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THE LEGENDARY COMEDIAN

Stands up for Animals

By Alysia Gray Painter



LILY Tomlin

When we think of Lily Tomlin, what comes to mind first isn't her star turns in films like *Short Cuts* and *9 to 5* or on television's *The West Wing*—or even Ernestine, the snorty, sassy, snood-sporting operator she played with such aplomb. Rather, we think of Edith Ann and

her loyal dog Buster. A precocious tot, squirmy but serious Edith Ann often discussed the adventures she shared with Buster, from ice skating and bath time to making him a sandwich that included mustard, pickles, oatmeal, cheese, pretzels, tuna fish, peanut butter, salami, raisins and one black olive. He didn't care for it, so Edith Ann decided to order pizza: "Buster likes pepperoni with double cheese and so do I. And that's the truth!"

Underlying this comedy routine is another truth: Tomlin's love of dogs, which comes through even when she speaks in the charming, halting voice of a five-and-a-half-year-old girl explaining how she made a sandwich so unappetizing that it even went bust with Buster.

Tomlin—who, upon seeing a stray running by the roadside, has been known to pull her car over and attempt to lure the frightened pup off the busy street by means of a fast-food sandwich—has lived with animals all her life. Recently, she headlined "Stand Up for the Animals," a comedy-and-causes

benefit at the Comedy Store in West Hollywood devoted to bringing attention to the work of Voice for the Animals (vtafoundation.org).

We hopped on the phone to chat with her about her work to improve the lot of Los Angeles Zoo's Billy the elephant and other animal-related topics, and she also shared a few stories of the dogs she has known. As it turns out, Lily has lived with and loved beasts of all stripes throughout her life. She speaks movingly of Chi Chi, the dog she had as a teen; a Corgi-mix named Princess she doted on for years; and her current critters, cats Murphy (who came into her life when she joined the cast of *Murphy Brown*, natch) and Roddy McDowell, so named because, Tomlin says, "he's elegant... and sensitive."

She has vivid and emotional memories of her pets, including the death of one of her beloved dogs. "I knew she wasn't well. I went out in the yard with her, and we lay on the grass for a long time, looking into each other's eyes. She died later that evening." We both paused

Zach Trenholm

COMFORTIS™

(spinalis)

Chewable Tablets

Brief Summary: Before using Comfortis chewable tablets, please consult the product insert, a summary of which follows:

Caution: Federal (USA) law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

Indications:

Administer orally once monthly. Administer with food for maximum effectiveness. Recommended dose range is 13.5–27.3 mg/kg (30–60 mg/kg). Available in five tablet sizes for dogs ranging from 5 to 125 lbs. Dogs over 125 lb should be administered the appropriate combination of tablets.

Contraindications:

COMFORTIS chewable tablets are indicated for the prevention and treatment of flea infestations (Ctenocephalides felis) on dogs for one month.

Warnings:

There are no known contraindications for the use of COMFORTIS chewable tablets.

Precautions:

COMFORTIS chewable tablets are for use in dogs and puppies 14 weeks of age and older (see **ANIMAL SAFETY**). Use with caution in breeding females (see **ANIMAL SAFETY**). Use with caution in dogs with pre-existing epilepsy (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**). The safe use of COMFORTIS chewable tablets in breeding males has not been evaluated.

Adverse Reactions:

In a well-controlled US field study, which included a total of 470 dogs (330 dogs treated with COMFORTIS chewable tablets and 140 dogs treated with an active control), no serious adverse reactions were observed with COMFORTIS chewable tablets. All reactions were regarded as mild and did not result in any dog being removed from the study.

Over the 50-day study period, all observations of potential adverse reactions were recorded. Reactions that occurred at an incidence > 1% within any of the 3 months of observation are presented in the following table. The most frequently reported adverse reaction in dogs in the COMFORTIS chewable tablets and active control groups was vomiting. The occurrence of vomiting, most commonly within 48 hours after treatment, decreased with repeated doses of COMFORTIS chewable tablets.

Percentage of Dogs (%) with Adverse Reactions

	Month 1		Month 2		Month 3	
	COMFORTIS Chewable Tablets (N=336)	Active Control Tablets (N=134)	COMFORTIS Chewable Tablets (N=282)	Active Control Tablets (N=124)	COMFORTIS Chewable Tablets (N=250)	Active Control Tablets (N=125)
Vomiting	10.7	12.2	7.8	3.2	5.0	4.0
Diarrhea	9.1	3.0	2.8	1.6	1.2	0.8
LETHARGY	7.8	5.0	3.5	4.8	1.2	0.8
Starches	6.7	5.0	4.3	0.8	1.2	0.0
Sores	3.8	5.0	0.4	2.4	0.0	0.0
Proteinuria	2.4	1.4	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.0
Isosporidiosis	1.8	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0
Increased Appetite	1.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0
Erythema	1.2	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0
Hypersalivoly	1.2	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0
Decreased Salivation	1.2	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0

¹ This number (n=133) is less than the total number of dogs in the safety population for the active control group (n=140) because one dog joined the study late and was only dosed at Month 3.

In US and European field studies, no dogs experienced seizures when dosed with COMFORTIS chewable tablets at the therapeutic dose range of 13.5–27.3 mg/kg (30–60 mg/kg), including 4 dogs with pre-existing epilepsy. Four epileptic dogs that received higher than the maximum recommended dose of 27.3 mg/kg (60 mg/kg) experienced at least one seizure within the week following the second and third doses of COMFORTIS chewable tablets, but no seizures following the first and third doses. The cause of the seizures observed in the field studies could not be determined.

Animal Safety:

COMFORTIS chewable tablets were tested in pure and mixed breeds of healthy dogs in well-controlled and non-controlled studies. No dogs were withdrawn from the field studies due to treatment-related adverse reactions. In a dose tolerance study, COMFORTIS chewable tablets were administered orally to adult Beagle dogs at average doses of up to 100 mg/kg once daily for 10 consecutive days (10.7 times the maximum recommended monthly dose). Vomiting was seen in 5 of 6 treated dogs during the first 5 days of treatment, usually within 2.5 hours of dosing. Treated females lost weight early in the treatment period, but their weights were similar to control dogs by the end of the 24-day study. COMFORTIS chewable tablets were not associated with any clinically significant changes in hematology, blood coagulation, electrolyte, chemistry, or clinical chemistry. Vomiting occurred in all dogs treated with COMFORTIS chewable tablets. By day 24, ALT values had returned to near baseline levels. Phagocytosis (macrophages) of the lymphoid tissue, the long-term effects of which are unknown, was seen in all dogs treated with COMFORTIS chewable tablets.

In a margin of safety study, COMFORTIS chewable tablets were administered orally to 6-week-old Beagle puppies at average doses of 1.5, 4.4, and 7.4 times the maximum recommended dose at 28-day intervals over a 6-month period. Vomiting was observed across all groups, including the control. Increased vomiting was observed at elevated doses, usually within 1 hour following administration. Vomiting at all doses decreased over time and stabilized when puppies were 14 weeks of age. The average daily and total weight gains of treated dogs were smaller than control dogs and were dose dependent. COMFORTIS chewable tablets were not associated with clinically significant changes in hematology, clinical chemistry, coagulation, or electrolyte parameters. Phagocytosis (macrophages) of the lymphoid tissue was seen in some dogs in the 4.4x group and all dogs in the 7.4x group. The long-term effects of phagocytosis are unknown. Treatment with COMFORTIS chewable tablets was not associated with any other clinically significant adverse clinical observations, gross necropsy, or histopathological changes.

In a reproductive safety study, COMFORTIS chewable tablets were administered orally to female Beagles at 1.3 and 4.4 times the maximum recommended therapeutic dose every 28 days prior to mating, during gestation, and during a six-week lactation period. No treatment-related adverse effects were noted for coagulation values, or for neonatal body temperature, necropsy, or histopathology findings for the dams or puppies. One dam from each treatment group experienced early pregnancy loss and one additional high dose dam aborted late term. The treated dams experienced more vomiting, especially at one hour post-dose, than the control dams. Puppies from dams treated at 1.3 times the maximum recommended therapeutic dose had lower body weights from puppies from control dams. Although puppy mortality between treated and control dams was not different, the puppies from the treated dams experienced more lethargy (4.4x group only), constipation, weakness, and fat cold to the touch (4.4x group only) than puppies from control dams.

A pilot study without a control group was conducted to analyze milk from three lactating dogs treated with an experimental formulation of spinosad at 1.5 times the maximum recommended dose administered at day 28 of gestation and 24 hours prior to parturition. The data demonstrated that spinosades were excreted in the milk of these dogs. Mortality and morbidity were greatest in puppies from the dam with the highest spinosad level in milk. The spinosad milk residue/plasma exposure ratio calculated from this study ranged from 2.2 to 3.5.

In well-controlled field studies, COMFORTIS chewable tablets were administered safely in conjunction with other frequently used veterinary products, such as vaccines, antihelmintics, antibiotics, steroids, flea and tick control products, anesthetics, NSAIDs, antihistamines, aluminum hydroxide remedies, shampoo, and prescription diets. Changes in hematology, clinical chemistry, and analysis values were compared pre- and post-study and were unremarkable.

Storage Information:

Store at 20–25°C (68–77°F), excursions permitted between 15 to 30°C (59 to 86°F).

To obtain full product information please call 866-545-5673 or visit www.comfortis4dogs.com.

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to consider the moment, and then she continued. “They’re our creatures, they’re just everything.”

Although Tomlin has lived with a number of dogs, she hasn’t worked with all that many, except for a comical elevator scene from *Big Business*, in which a dog she’s walking gets on an elevator and the doors shut. I asked about the connection between Hollywood and hounds beyond the larger topic of animal actors, and if there were any lessons humans working in showbiz could take from dogs in general.

She spoke about the authenticity of pups—“They have an innocence and a goodness because they’re not ambitious...”—and what performers can learn from that. Summing it up perfectly, Tomlin observed that “dogs want to love their people, and actors need to love their audience. Dogs have all the empathetic qualities that a good actor should have.” Dogs seem to inspire just about every calling, it seems.

Including conflict resolution. Remembering a time when she had a lot of animals in the house—including a goat named Bucky that she would take on outings with her dogs (“You’d have to walk behind him with a little lobby dustpan and a broom, sweeping up his pellets.”)—Tomlin recalled how one of her dogs would take on the role of mediator. “We had two cats in the house; the cats loved to torment Diva [a Doberman] because she was so easily cowed. One day, the cats were at the bottom of the stairs and Diva was at the top: They were at an impasse. Tessie [a Terrier], who was a little bossy thing, ran through Diva’s



Tessie and Tomlin

Courtesy Lily Tomlin

legs and stood there, barking at the cats and Diva too, as if to break it up.”

While tales of Bucky and Diva were not told during the “Stand Up for the Animals” night, Edith Ann did make an appearance, to much applause. Later, I learned more about Voice for the Animals from executive director Melya Kaplan.

Kaplan’s approach to animal assistance could be described as multi-dimensional. Among her organization’s projects are Billy the elephant’s well being, an animal assistance hotline, a senior-animal rescue program, and efforts to help the huge population of dogs and cats living on the streets in Greece. She’s also assisting families facing foreclosure with keeping their pets. And she isn’t shy about sending praise to one of her most front-and-center advocates. “Lily is absolutely phenomenal,” says Kaplan. “She’s been the celebrity who took the lead, just saying it like it is.”

Hearing about Tomlin’s work with this group, and her animated tales of Tessie and Diva and Chi Chi, it’s not surprising that she’s a friend of the furry. Now, whenever we catch a clip of Edith Ann bragging about Buster, we’ll think of all the real Busters Lily’s loved along the way, and her willingness to extend that love to dogs and cats (and elephants) today. ☺

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