

## THE FACTS ABOUT LONG TERM MEDICATIONS What All Pet Owners Should Know About Their Pet's Pills

### ARTHRITIS MEDICATIONS

Rimadyl® and Etogesic® - *carprofen and etodolac* These drugs are non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) agents that reduce inflammation, fever and pain. These drugs are generally safe for dogs and have few side effects if given as directed. Some vomiting and/or diarrhea have been reported. Liver and kidney function blood tests should be taken prior to administration and two weeks afterwards to ensure safety. Regular blood tests every six months are taken to detect any abnormalities with liver and kidney function.

Potentially fatal bleeding ulcers in the stomach and intestines may result if given with aspirin, Tylenol®, ibuprofen, prednisone or Medrol®. Use with caution in patients receiving enalapril or digoxin. May increase the effects of furosemide, and Phenobarbital.

### HEART MEDICATIONS

Digoxin – A cardiac glycoside used to treat congestive heart failure and certain abnormal heart rhythms. Blood levels must be closely monitored or serious complications may develop. Kidney and liver function tests and electrolyte levels should be taken prior to use and then after 30 days and then every 3-6 months as directed. Blood levels of digoxin will be taken 14 days after starting treatment until proper dosing is achieved. Blood digoxin levels will then be taken every 3 months.

Common side effects include GI upset, anorexia and weight loss. Potential complications include fatal abnormal heart rhythms and kidney damage. Most side effects are related to high blood levels.

Enacard® - enalapril melete – An ACE-inhibitor used to treat many forms of heart disease, especially congestive heart failure caused by mitral insufficiency. Blood tests should be taken prior to use, 30-days after administration and every six months to ensure proper kidney function and electrolyte levels.

Reported side effects include GI upset (vomiting, diarrhea, anorexia). Low blood pressure, elevated serum potassium and kidney damage may potentially result. Furosemide dosages may be lowered if used with enalapril. Increased enalapril dosage may be required if given with Rimadyl® or Etogesic®.

Furosemide - Lasix® - A Diuretic commonly used to treat pulmonary edema (fluid in the lungs) associated with congestive heart failure. Complete Blood Cell Count (CBC), liver and kidney function blood tests and electrolyte levels, especially potassium, should be taken prior to administration and 30 days afterwards to ensure safety. Regular blood tests are taken every six months.

Reported side effects include increased thirst and urination, dehydration, electrolyte imbalances (especially potassium, sodium and calcium), GI upset, anemia, leukemia, restlessness and weakness.

Caution should be used when giving the following drugs with furosemide: theophylline, steroids, Rimadyl®, Etogesic®, digoxin and insulin.

#### ALLERGY MEDICATIONS

Medrol® (methylprednisolone), prednisolone and prednisone – Corticosteroid-responsive conditions are commonly used to treat allergic conditions, especially allergic dermatitis, Liver and kidney function blood tests should be taken prior to long term administration then in 30 days to ensure safety. Regular blood tests every six months are taken to detect any abnormalities with liver and kidney function.

These drugs have few side effects if given on an alternating-day basis. Common side effects include increased appetite, thirst and urination. Long term daily usage or high dosage usage may lead to potentially fatal Cushing's disease (iatrogenic hyperadrenocorticism), GI ulcers, increased appetite and weight gain, panting, dull, dry hair coat, GI upset, activation or worsening of diabetes mellitus, hypothyroidism, pancreatitis, muscle wasting, and behavioral changes (depression, lethargy, aggression).

Care should be taken when giving any of the following with these drugs: Amphotericin B, furosemide, insulin, erythromycin and any cancer medications. **DO NOT** give with Rimadyl®, Etogesic®, aspirin, Tylenol®, ibuprofen, etc.

Hydroxyzine and diphenhydramine – Antihistamines often used in the treatment of allergic conditions. Blood tests should be taken after one month of usage and then every six months. The most common side effects are sedation. Other side effects include dry mouth and GI upset.

Antihistamines should be used with caution in patients with glaucoma, prostatic hypertrophy, hyperthyroidism and heart disease.

#### URETHRAL INCONTINENCE

Phenlpropanolamine – Commonly used to treat urethral incontinence. Blood tests should be taken prior to long term usage, after one month and every 6 months to ensure safe usage.

Common side effects include hyperexcitability, increased heart rate and decreased appetite.

Caution should be used when administering Anipryl®, ephedrine, Rimadyl®, Etogesic®, aspirin, Tylenol® and Elavil®

## SEIZURE MEDICATION

Phenobarbital - Luminal® - Used to treat epilepsy and seizure disorders. Blood tests are taken prior to administration then Phenobarbital levels are taken every two weeks until normal blood levels are achieved. Liver function tests are taken one month after starting Phenobarbital and then every 6 months. Blood tests should be taken as close to normal time of administration as possible (maximum period 2 hours before up to 2 hours after).

Common side effects include Lethargy or depression (especially during the first week), anxiety or agitation, increased thirst, appetite and urination.

Phenobarbital may decrease the action of antihistamines, corticosteroids, metronidazole, doxycycline, and beta blockers.

## THYROID DISEASE MEDICATIONS

Levothyroxine - Soloxine® - Used to treat hypothyroidism. After diagnosing by low total T4 and free T4 by Equilibrium Dialysis, total t4 levels are taken one month after beginning levothyroxine. Total T4 levels are then taken every 6 months to ensure proper dosing. Occasional free T4 by Equilibrium Dialysis levels will be necessary. Blood tests should be taken 4 to 6 hours after administration.

At proper levels, there should be no side effects.

Levothyroxine may alter insulin and digoxin requirements. Many drugs may affect T4 levels. Inform your doctor if your pet is receiving any medications when blood levels are obtained.

Tapazole® - methimazole – Used to treat hyperthyroidism. Because of the potential for serious complications, blood tests are very important when using this drug. A CBC is taken before starting Tapazole® and total T4, CBC, liver and kidney function blood tests are taken every 14 days until proper levels are achieved. These blood tests will then be performed every 3-6 months to ensure safe and proper dosing.

Patients with liver disease or clotting disorders should not receive the drug. 1-20% of all cats treated develop adverse effects. Notify the hospital if you observe decreased appetite, vomiting, lethargy or any abnormality that concerns you.

***This information as researched and compiled by Dr. Ernest Ward, Jr.  
These are suggested guidelines only. As with an medication regimen, your doctor will use his or her clinical discretion with each patient and will refer to medication product inserts and other sources for a complete description of drug interactions and cautions.  
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