

Specialist Referral Service  
Willows Information Sheets

## Treating pain in your pet





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Your veterinary surgeon may prescribe specific pain medications for your pet. These may be for post-operative pain relief, trapped nerves, chronic pain conditions such as osteoarthritis, or just for acute pain following an injury.

It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that pain relief medications are given correctly.

- Follow the dosage instructions carefully and report any problems immediately
- NEVER give human medications to your pet unless specifically directed by your vet
- Keep ALL medications in a safe place, out of reach of your pet and children. Accidental over-dose can occur and in some circumstances can be fatal.

## Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) e.g Carprofen (Rimadyl), Meloxicam (Metacam)

NSAIDs are very commonly used drugs in both cats and dogs to treat inflammation and pain. They are usually safe however there are potential risks of using these medications in your pet, of which your veterinary surgeon will make you aware. Careful adherence to dosing quantities and frequency MUST be followed. NSAIDs should always be given with food. If your pet is not eating please contact your veterinary surgeon for advice - it maybe the medication needs to be changed.

Side effects can include lethargy, inappetence, vomiting and diarrhoea. If these symptoms should occur STOP the medication and contact your veterinary surgeon. Continuing to use these medications despite symptoms occurring can result in more serious complications such as gastric ulceration, intestinal bleeding and kidney toxicity.

## Buprenorphine

Buprenorphine is used to treat mild to moderate pain in cats and dogs. Although used frequently in dogs, it is particularly useful for cats in the home environment as the medication can be given orally – it is absorbed through the lining of the mouth.

Buprenorphine is an opiate. It is generally safe to use providing that you follow the dosing guidelines provided by your veterinary surgeon correctly. There are a few common side effects that you should be aware of including sedation, weakness or slow breathing. If you become concerned about your pet do not hesitate to seek veterinary attention.

## Tramadol

Tramadol is used to treat moderate pain in dogs. The effects are similar to opiates, for example, morphine. Tramadol may be prescribed on its own or in combination with other pain killers. When Tramadol is prescribed for your pet be sure to understand the dosage instructions clearly to enable you to correctly and accurately administer the medication. Tramadol is administered most commonly as capsules.

Tramadol can have a bitter taste so may cause your dog to drool following administration. Side effects seen with Tramadol are not common but can include upset stomach, constipation, and drowsiness. Although not too dangerous if these symptoms occur please contact your veterinary surgeon as they may wish to alter your dog's prescription.

More severe side effects can occur rarely; these include convulsions, difficulty breathing or slowing of heart rate. If any of these symptoms occur they require IMMEDIATE veterinary attention.

## Gabapentin

Gabapentin is an anti-convulsant drug but is commonly used to treat trapped nerves or chronic pain in cats and dogs. It comes in oral capsules and the dose prescribed by your veterinary surgeon will be specific for your pet.

The most common side effect of Gabapentin is sedation. It is advised that you monitor your pet for any incoordination or drowsiness. If you become concerned please contact your veterinary surgeon.

## Paracetamol

Paracetamol is toxic to cats. **DO NOT GIVE PARACETAMOL TO YOUR CAT!**

Paracetamol is used to treat a variety of pain conditions in dogs. It is generally safe but can be toxic when given at the incorrect dose. Please DO NOT administer paracetamol to your pet unless it has been prescribed by your veterinary surgeon, and only use the prescribed formulation as some human ones contain additives which can be toxic. Side effects of paracetamol can include vomiting, difficulty breathing, drooling, dullness or a painful tummy. Please contact your veterinary surgeon should these symptoms arise.

## Amantidine

Amantidine is used most commonly to treat chronic pain conditions such as osteoarthritis in dogs and cats. It is administered orally in either liquid or capsule formulations. Side effects you may see in your pet can include agitation, diarrhoea, flatulence and dizziness. You should contact your veterinary surgeon if you see any of these symptoms in your pet.

## Amitriptyline

Amitriptyline is a tricyclic depressant used to treat trapped nerves or chronic pain in cats and dogs. It is administered orally as tablets. Side effects can include drowsiness, dry mouth or eyes, decreased urination, constipation, vomiting, hyperexcitability, increase in seizures in epileptic pets. If any of these signs should occur, the treatment should be stopped and you should contact your vet.

***If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).***

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