

# Fluconazole

- Keep this leaflet safe, as you may need to refer to it again.
- Please ask your vet or veterinary nurse if you have any further questions.
- This medicine has been prescribed for your pet ONLY. Do not take it yourself or give it to another person or any other animal; it may harm them even if their symptoms appear to be the same.

The medicine you have been given for your dog or cat is called fluconazole. It may have a trade name such as Diflucan, but often will just be called fluconazole.

## What is fluconazole?

Fluconazole is a medicine belonging to the triazole antifungal drug family. It is used to treat various fungal infections in dogs and cats.

## Why has my pet been prescribed fluconazole?

Fluconazole is used to treat fungal organisms such as *Cryptococcus* (e.g. nasal, ocular or brain infections), *Candida* (a yeast), *Histoplasma* and *Blastomyces*. It can also be used to treat dermatophytosis (also known as 'ringworm'), which is a fungal infection of the skin. It can reach 'difficult' sites, such as the eyes and brain.

## How should I store fluconazole?

Fluconazole may be prescribed as capsules or as a powder that is mixed with water to make up a liquid suspension. The capsules and powder can be stored at room temperature. Once the liquid suspension is made, this should be stored between 5–30°C (do not freeze). Discard any unused suspension after 2 weeks. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

## How do I give fluconazole to my pet?

Fluconazole comes in liquid and tablet form and can be given with or without food; it may be less likely to cause gastrointestinal side effects if given with food. **Wear gloves when giving the liquid suspension. Do not crush or open capsules.**

## How long will my pet need to take fluconazole?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time that this medication needs to be given for (this can vary depending on the patient, type of infection being treated and response to treatment). Treatment of dermatophytosis usually involves a '1 week on, 1 week off' protocol for several weeks.

## What should I do if I run out of fluconazole?

Order more medication from your vet as needed. If you do run out, contact your own vet for further advice and restart the course as soon as possible.

## What should I do if I miss a dose?

Give the medication as soon as possible after realizing that a dose has been missed. If it is almost time for your pet's next scheduled dose, it is better to skip the missed dose altogether. **DO NOT** give a double dose to make up for a missed dose and do not exceed the total stated dose in any one 24-hour period.

## What should I do if my pet is accidentally given too many doses?

Contact your vet if your pet is given an overdose of fluconazole. There is limited information available regarding fluconazole overdose in dogs and cats. Adverse effects include gastrointestinal signs (e.g. vomiting, diarrhoea, inappetence).

## Can my pet take fluconazole if I am already giving them other drugs?

Tell your vet if you are giving your pet any other medications, even if you think they already know. This includes herbal or off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop, pharmacy or health store. Fluconazole can increase the blood concentrations of certain other drugs when given together, so doses may need to be adjusted. Some anti-seizure medications can reduce blood concentrations of fluconazole. If you have any concerns about using fluconazole with other medications, please contact your vet for advice.

## What are the possible side effects of fluconazole for my pet?

Side effects include gastrointestinal signs (e.g. vomiting, diarrhoea, inappetence). Liver toxicity can also occur, typically with long-term administration. It tends to be better tolerated than some other antifungals (but is not automatically the 'best' choice, depending on the organism/site of infection).

## What should I do if my pet is unwell while taking fluconazole?

If your pet is unwell while receiving the medication, stop the medication and contact your vet promptly for advice.

## The Prescribing Cascade

This medicine is authorized for use in human patients and is used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. The medicine is not authorized by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), for use in dogs/cats/pets. Your vet can explain the 'prescribing cascade' in further detail to you and also explain why they are prescribing this drug for your pet. You will be asked to sign a consent form stating that you understand the reasons that the drug is being prescribed and its possible complications, before the treatment is issued.

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### **What should I do if a person accidentally takes this drug?**

If a person accidentally ingests this medication, the person should visit a hospital **immediately**. Take this leaflet and any remaining medication (including any containers, even if empty) with you.

### **Whom do I contact if I want to know more?**

If you have any questions about this drug or concerns about your pet's health, contact your vet. They will know your pet's medical history and can provide further information on fluconazole.