



Medicine series

Practice details

# Fludrocortisone

- 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 fludrocortisone. It may have a trade name such as Florinef®, but often will just be called fludrocortisone.

## What is fludrocortisone?

Fludrocortisone is a type of steroid that acts in many tissues of the body. It makes the kidneys retain salt in the body and excrete more potassium in the urine. It also helps to keep the intestines healthy and to maintain bodyweight.

## Why has my pet been prescribed fludrocortisone?

Your pet has a condition called Addison's disease (hypoadrenocorticism). This means they have lost the ability to produce a hormone (aldosterone) that controls the body's salt and potassium balance. Your pet also lacks another hormone (cortisol) that helps control sugar balance, maintains normal gut function and is required to keep the pet lively and well overall. Fludrocortisone replaces the first of these hormones and partly replaces the second.

## How should I store fludrocortisone?

Store the medicine in a refrigerator but do not allow it to freeze. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

## How do I give fludrocortisone tablets to my pet?

Fludrocortisone tablets can be put in a small amount of food and this can be given to your pet before their main meal. Alternatively, the tablets can be placed carefully on the back of your pet's tongue and their mouth held closed until the entire dose has been swallowed.

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

Your pet will need to take fludrocortisone for the rest of their life. Sometimes, a different type of medication (given by injection) can be used instead of fludrocortisone to manage your pet's condition. Your vet will advise you if the fludrocortisone should be stopped.

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

Try not to run out of tablets. Make sure you order more tablets from your vet if your supply is getting low. If you do run out, contact your own vet for further advice and restart the course as soon as possible. **Stopping fludrocortisone suddenly can be very dangerous and even fatal, and therefore should always be avoided.**

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

If you do miss a dose, give your pet the dose that they should have had **straight away**. Make sure the next dose is separated by at least 6 hours before reverting to normal dosing time. **DO NOT** give double doses to make up for missed doses.

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

One extra dose is unlikely to hurt your pet. Contact your vet if more than one extra dose has been given. Repeatedly giving too much or giving a very large overdose may lead to a salt and potassium imbalance, which could cause side effects such as generalized weakness and brain damage. If you have any concerns, contact your own vet for further advice.

## Can my pet take fludrocortisone 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. Furosemide or thiazides (both drugs often used for heart problems) and some antifungal drugs can potentially interfere with the effects of fludrocortisone. Your vet will be able to provide further advice about the concurrent use of these medications if necessary.

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

As fludrocortisone has some other steroid effects, you may see a slight increase in thirst or appetite compared to normal. If your pet shows **any** unusual symptoms whilst taking this medication, please contact your vet.

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

**Do not stop giving fludrocortisone** – this can be fatal. If your vet has supplied you with another drug called prednisolone, then give this to your pet straight away at the dose recommended by your vet. **Contact your vet immediately** for advice. Make sure you tell them that your pet has Addison's disease.

## 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 takes your pet's tablets, the person should be taken to the local hospital **immediately**. Take this leaflet and any remaining tablets plus their container (even if it is 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 own vet. They will know your pet's medical history and will know about fludrocortisone.