

# Budesonide

- 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 budesonide. It may have a trade name such as Budenofalk®, Budelin®, Cortiment®, Entocort® or Pulmicort®, but often will just be called budesonide.

## What is budesonide?

Budesonide belongs to a group of medicines called corticosteroids. These drugs reduce inflammation and suppress the immune system. When given orally, budesonide acts directly on the gut, with less drug absorbed and distributed around the body. This is thought to reduce the likelihood of side effects. Inhaled formulations of budesonide can also be used in the treatment of respiratory diseases.

## Why has my pet been prescribed budesonide?

Budesonide is used in veterinary patients to treat inflammatory bowel disease. This is where the gut is unable to function properly because the walls of the intestines have become very inflamed and thickened. It is sometimes used to treat inflammation of the airways in cats (e.g. feline asthma).

## How should I store budesonide?

This medicine does not require special storage conditions. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

## How do I give budesonide capsules to my pet?

Try to disguise them in a strongly flavoured food that your pet likes. Alternatively, they can be placed carefully on the back of your pet's tongue and their mouth held closed until the entire dose has been swallowed. Some capsules have a special 'enteric' coating that prevents the drug being inactivated before it reaches the inflamed section of the gut. These enteric-coated capsules should not be split open but must be given whole. If your pet has been prescribed an inhaled form of budesonide, please use the spacer device provided by your vet and follow the instructions. Most animals learn to accept the inhaler and get used to it, although there are exceptions.

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

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients.

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

Try not to run out of capsules. Make sure you order more 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 budesonide treatment suddenly after prolonged use can**

**be dangerous and should always be avoided. If your pet becomes depressed, unwell or vomits, contact your vet immediately.**

## 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 that the next dose is separated by at least 6 hours before reverting back to the 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?

**Contact your vet immediately** if your pet is given an overdose of budesonide.

## Can my pet take budesonide 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. Do not give your pet budesonide if they are already taking erythromycin (an antibiotic), cimetidine (used to treat stomach ulcers) or drugs used to treat fungal infections (e.g. itraconazole). Check with your vet before giving oral antacids to your pet as they may cause the drug to act in the wrong part of the intestine. Other corticosteroids (e.g. prednisolone) given by mouth should not be taken by pets that are already taking budesonide.

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

Budesonide may cause signs associated with excessively high levels of steroids; these include hair loss, muscle wasting, lethargy, an increase in appetite and an increase in drinking and frequency of urination. 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 budesonide?

If your pet is unwell while receiving budesonide, **do not suddenly stop giving the drug as this can be dangerous.** You should contact your vet as soon as possible 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 takes your pet's medicine, the person should be taken to the local hospital **immediately**. Take this leaflet and any remaining capsules 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 budesonide.