



Medicine series

Practice details

Lamivudine

- 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 lamivudine. It may also be called 3TC. Lamivudine may have a trade name such as Epivir® or Zeffix®, but often will just be called lamivudine.

What is lamivudine?

Lamivudine belongs to a group of medicines called nucleoside analogues. These drugs cause retroviruses (such as feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV)) to replicate more slowly.

Why has my pet been prescribed lamivudine?

Lamivudine is used to treat cats infected with FIV. It works by blocking the proper functioning of an enzyme used by the virus to replicate itself. In cats not showing clinical signs, it may delay the onset of the signs. In cats showing clinical signs, it may improve recovery in combination with other therapies. However, after a while, the virus becomes resistant to the effects of the drug.

How should I store lamivudine?

This medicine should be stored at room temperature and away from excess heat and moisture. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

How do I give lamivudine tablets or solution to my pet?

Try to disguise the tablets in a small quantity of strongly flavoured food that your pet likes. 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. The solution can be gently squirted behind the large canine tooth with the pet's mouth held firmly closed. Ensure that plenty of fresh water is available.

How long will my pet need to take lamivudine?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients. Do not stop giving lamivudine to your pet unless advised to do so by your vet.

What should I do if I run out of tablets?

Try not to run out. Make sure you order more lamivudine from your vet if your supply is getting low. Missing a dose may cause signs of your pet's disease to return. 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?

If a dose is missed, give the medication as soon as possible. However, it is best to skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your

pet's next scheduled dose. **DO NOT** give a double dose to make up for the missed dose and do not exceed the stated dose in any one 24-hour period.

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

Contact your vet immediately if your pet receives an overdose of lamivudine as higher doses increase the risk of side effects.

Can my pet take lamivudine 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 know. This includes herbal and off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop, pharmacy or health store.

What are the possible side effects of lamivudine for my pet?

Lamivudine may cause changes in the bone marrow that causes a reduction in the production of new blood cells for the body. For this reason, regular blood tests are usually recommended. There may be other side effects which are not yet known. 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 lamivudine?

If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, you should contact your vet as soon as possible for advice. You should not give further doses in the meantime.

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 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 lamivudine.

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.

While the editors and the BSAVA have made every effort in preparing this information leaflet, the contents and any statements are made in good faith purely for general guidance and cannot be regarded as substitute for professional advice. The publishers, contributors and the BSAVA do not take responsibility for the information provided on this leaflet and hence do not accept any liability for loss or expense incurred (by you or persons that you disseminate the materials to) as a result of relying on content in this leaflet. To this end, you are advised to consult your vet and seek their professional advice before taking any steps set out in this leaflet. If you are a vet, you must not rely on the contents in this leaflet without independently verifying the correctness and veracity of the contents. BSAVA is not responsible for any alterations made to this document from the version supplied.