



Medicine series

Practice details

Mirtazapine

- 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 is called mirtazapine. It may have a trade name such as Mirataz or Zispin, but often will just be called mirtazapine.

What is mirtazapine?

Mirtazapine is an antidepressant used in people, but it is not used in dogs for this purpose. It acts as an appetite stimulant in dogs, as well as having an anti-nausea and anti-sickness effect.

Why has my dog been prescribed mirtazapine?

Mirtazapine is used to increase appetite in dogs that are not eating well for a variety of reasons including kidney disease or during anticancer chemotherapy. It also has anti-nausea effects so may be used in dogs that are vomiting or nauseous.

How should I store mirtazapine?

The tablets should be stored at room temperature and protected from moisture and light. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children**. Return any unused or leftover medication to your vet practice for safe disposal.

How do I give mirtazapine to my dog?

Tablets can be placed carefully on the back of your dog's tongue and their mouth held closed until the entire dose has been swallowed. A topical ear cream version of mirtazapine is also sometimes prescribed. This should be rubbed on to your pet's ear according to your vet's instructions.

How long will my dog need to take mirtazapine?

Your vet will inform you of how long the medicine needs to be administered. Mirtazapine can be used for short-term or long-term support of appetite. Gradual withdrawal of mirtazapine is recommended in dogs that have been taking it for a long time.

What should I do if I run out of mirtazapine?

Contact your vet if you run out.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

The simplest option is to wait until the next dose is due. You can give the missed dose late, but if you do this you should then wait until the same time the next day to give the next dose, re-establishing the correct dosing interval. **DO NOT** give a double dose to make up for the missed dose.

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

Contact your vet immediately for advice. Overdose can cause various effects including sedation, hyperactivity, increased heart rate, tremors, shivering, dilated pupils and difficulty breathing.

Can my dog take mirtazapine if I am already giving them other drugs?

Tell your vet if you are giving your dog 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. It is usually safe to give mirtazapine with other drugs, but it should not be given in conjunction with amitraz, amitriptyline, cimetidine, clomipramine, cyproheptadine, fluoxetine or tramadol.

What are the possible side effects of mirtazapine for my dog?

The most common side effect is drowsiness but other behavioural effects are possible. The drug can cause an increase in liver enzymes; these usually return to normal after the drug is stopped.

What should I do if my dog is unwell while taking mirtazapine?

If your pet is unwell while taking mirtazapine, contact your vet as soon as possible for advice.

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

If a person accidentally takes your pet's medication, contact a doctor **immediately**. Show them this leaflet and any remaining tablets plus their container (even if it is empty).

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 mirtazapine.

The Prescribing Cascade

This medicine is authorized for use in human patients and certain forms are authorized for use in cats. It is also 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. 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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