



Medicine series

Practice details

# Calcium carbonate

- 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 calcium carbonate. It may have a trade name such as Calcichew, but often will just be called calcium carbonate.

## What is calcium carbonate?

Calcium is an essential element in many bodily functions.

## Why has my pet been prescribed calcium carbonate?

Vets use calcium carbonate most commonly to treat a calcium deficiency. Low calcium can be seen with a condition called hypoparathyroidism or after surgery to remove a parathyroid gland.

## How should I store calcium carbonate?

Calcium carbonate has no special storage requirements. For safety, *all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.*

## How do I give calcium carbonate tablets to my pet?

The medication should be given by mouth. The tablets can be given either directly into the mouth, placed on the back of the tongue so that they will be swallowed, or given in some strongly flavoured food.

## How long will my pet need to take calcium carbonate?

Your vet will tell you how long you need to administer calcium carbonate for. This medication can be necessary in the short term or for the rest of your pet's life.

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

If you run out of medication, you should contact your vet, who has a good understanding of your pet's conditions and the reasons for prescribing calcium carbonate.

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

If you miss a dose you can either give the dose straight away and re-establish the correct dosing intervals or wait until the next dose is due. **DO NOT** give a double dose to make up for the missed dose.

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

**Contact your vet immediately for advice.** Oral overdoses of calcium-containing products are unlikely to cause hypercalcaemia unless there is concurrent administration with vitamin D. If you are worried about any possible signs of excessively high calcium (increased drinking, loss of appetite or vomiting), then you should contact your vet to review the dosing.

## Can my pet take calcium carbonate if I am already giving them other medications?

Tell your vet if you are giving your pet other medications. This includes herbal or off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop, pharmacy or health store. All calcium salts may block verapamil and other calcium channel blockers.

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

Side effects are uncommon.

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

Stop the medication and contact your vet as soon as possible.

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

If a person accidentally takes your pet's medicine, they should contact their GP for further information. However, as calcium carbonate is commonly used for humans, immediate medical attention is not usually necessary.

## 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.