

# Dexamethasone

- 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 dexamethasone 0.1% w/v. It may have a trade name such as Maxidex® or Maxitrol® (which also contains antibiotics) but often will just be called dexamethasone.

## What is dexamethasone?

Dexamethasone belongs to a group of medicines known as steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. It is used in the treatment of eye inflammation.

## Why has my pet been prescribed dexamethasone?

Dexamethasone is prescribed in cases of inflammation of the eye including allergic conjunctivitis, inflammatory and immune mediated corneal disease (keratitis), episcleritis and anterior uveitis. It is used postoperatively after cataract removal and for the reduction of swelling.

## How should I store dexamethasone?

Dexamethasone can be stored at room temperature once opened (not above 25°C). Do not refrigerate or freeze the solution. Keep container tightly closed. Once you have opened the bottle, do not use it for longer than one month, even if there is solution remaining. Store in the original packaging. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of reach and sight of children.**

## How do I give dexamethasone drops to my pet?

Topical eye treatments are not painful for your pet but the sensation of drops touching the eye may be unpleasant. Try to administer the drops just before feeding or other normal activities your pet enjoys. Gently push your pet's head upwards using a thumb under the bottom jaw, hold the top eyelid open with the first finger of the same hand. Holding the bottle containing the eye drops in the other hand, direct the nozzle towards the eye, keeping it at an angle so as not to directly poke the eye, and administer the prescribed dose. Hold your pet's head in this upward position for a few seconds to allow the eye drops to be absorbed. It is important to reinforce your pet's good behaviour with lots of praise and stroking. If the drop of medication is not retained in the eye upon dosing for any reason, then apply another drop.

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

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients. It is important that you complete the course of treatment even if your pet seems to be well. If your pet is still unwell at the end of the course, then you should contact your vet as soon as possible.

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

Try to ensure that you have enough medication in advance of it running out. However, 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 you miss a dose, 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 total 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 dexamethasone. However, if a single extra dose is given on one occasion only, it is unlikely to cause any significant problems. If you use more solution than prescribed, it can be washed out of the eye with warm water.

## Can my pet take dexamethasone 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. Dexamethasone should not be given (if possible) with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, which are often used for treating arthritis or chronic pain. Avoid using dexamethasone eye drops when there is bacterial or fungal infection, unless specifically instructed to do so by your vet.

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

Side effects are dependent on the dose prescribed, length of treatment and individual patient. Side effects such as mild irritation or redness of the eyes and drooping of the eyelid can occur. Sometimes dexamethasone can cause increased thirst and urination, increased appetite and weight gain, however this is not common. Side effects usually cease once the medication has been withdrawn. If you notice signs of pain or an eye infection (e.g. squinting, redness of the

### The Prescribing Cascade

This medicine is authorized for use in human patients and certain forms are authorized for use in pets for certain conditions. It is also used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. 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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sclera (white of the eye), discharge or ulcers) or your pet is unable to open their eye, contact your vet or a veterinary emergency provider **immediately**. If your pet is pregnant or nursing, talk to your vet about the risk of using this drug. If your pet is diabetic, you may see changes in blood or urine glucose, please discuss this with your vet.

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

If your pet has a severe allergic reaction to this drug (difficulty breathing or swelling of the throat), contact your vet or a veterinary emergency provider immediately. If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, or the eye is becoming particularly irritated or painful or there is drooping of the eyelid, you should 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 medicine, they should contact their doctor immediately. This leaflet along with any remaining medication and its container (even if it is empty) should be taken with them.

### **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 further information on dexamethasone.