

Common Drug Side Effects

Antihistamines (Benadryl, Chlorpheniramine, Hydroxyzine) are primarily used for allergies. The most common side effect is sedation ranging from mild drowsiness to severe depression. A dry mouth may also occur. In some pets, excitability, including muscle tremors, may be seen.

Bronchodilators (Theophylline, Aminophylline) are used in certain respiratory conditions. Common side effects include mild excitement, insomnia, vomiting, diarrhea, increased thirst, and increased urination.

Clavamox (Amoxicillin-clavulanic acid) and **Cephalexin** are antibiotics used to treat many types of infections. Side effects include vomiting, diarrhea, and decreased appetite. Giving the antibiotic with a meal may help reduce these signs. Rarely, hypersensitivity reactions occur causing rashes, fever, blood cell disorders, or anaphylactic shock (severe allergic reaction).

Corticosteroids (Prednisone, Dexamethasone, Triamcinalone, Depo-medrol, Temaril-P) are potent anti-inflammatory drugs used in a variety of medical conditions, including controlling allergies. Steroids have many common side effects and should be used only as directed by a veterinarian. Side effects include increased thirst, increased urination (animals with weak bladder control may develop incontinence), weight gain, excessive panting, loss of appetite, vomiting or diarrhea. In high doses, steroids may cause immune suppression or gastric ulcers. Long term use of steroids, even at low doses, may cause adrenal gland disease, liver disease, and an increased risk of diabetes. Annual blood tests are recommended for long term use.

Metronidazole is an antibiotic that is used in certain intestinal or systemic infections. Side effects include lethargy, decreased appetite, and vomiting. Neurological symptoms such as stumbling, falling or balance problems may occur, especially in high doses or with long term use.

Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (Rimadyl, Etogesic, Deramaxx, Zubrin, Meloxicam) NSAIDs are commonly used in the treatment of pain and inflammation. The primary side effect is gastrointestinal upset or ulcers (vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite, dark tarry stools). Rarely, liver dysfunction/damage may occur. NSAIDs should not be used in cats except under veterinary supervision. **Do not use NSAIDs with other anti-inflammatory drugs, including aspirin or aspirin containing products.** Over the counter human medications should not be used except as directed by a veterinarian. A blood test checking liver enzymes should be done prior to long term use, and then annually. A follow-up blood test is recommended three weeks after starting on the medication.

Phenobarbital is an anticonvulsant medication used primarily to treat seizures. Common side effects include sedation, ranging from drowsiness to depression, stumbling when walking, anxiety, increased thirst, appetite and urination. Side effects generally decrease after a few weeks as the pet's system adapts to the medication. If side effects seem severe, please let us know. Liver dysfunction/damage may occur and rarely, blood cell disorders may be seen. An annual drug level and blood test is needed 10-12 hours post pill.

Sulfa-Trimethoprim (Tribrissen) is an antibiotic. Side effects include decreased tear production (dry eye), allergic reactions (facial swelling, hives), joint swelling, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, increased thirst and increased urination. Rarely, liver dysfunction or red blood cell disorders may occur.

Thyroxine (Soloxine) is a thyroid hormone used in treating hypothyroidism. Side effects include increased heart rate, increased appetite, increased thirst and urination, excitability and excessive panting. An adjustment in dose may be needed to eliminate these side effects. An annual T4 blood level is needed 4-6 hours post pill.

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REV: 12/29/03