



Medicine series

Practice details

# Paracetamol

- 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 paracetamol, also known as acetaminophen. It may have a trade name such as Perfalgan, but often will just be called paracetamol.

## What is paracetamol?

Paracetamol is a common painkiller used to treat aches, pain and a high temperature in dogs. Paracetamol is toxic to cats.

## Why has my pet been prescribed paracetamol?

Your dog has been prescribed paracetamol for the control of mild to moderate pain, as an anti-inflammatory or to reduce a temperature. Paracetamol has few gastric side effects and so is often administered to patients who might otherwise be at risk of gastric ulcers or have sensitive stomachs.

## How should I store paracetamol?

This medicine does not require special storage conditions, the tablets are fine to be stored at room temperature, away from light. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

## How do I give paracetamol to my pet?

Paracetamol is either in a tablet or syrup formulation, both given via the mouth. Try to disguise the medication in a small quantity of strongly flavoured food that your dog likes. Paracetamol syrup can be gently squirted into the side of your dog's mouth or the tablets can be placed carefully on the back of your dog's tongue and their mouth closed until the entire dose has been swallowed.

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

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give paracetamol. This may vary between patients. It is important that you complete the course of treatment even if your dog seems to be well. If your dog 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 paracetamol?

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 dog'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 dog receives an overdose of paracetamol. Overdose of paracetamol can cause irreversible liver damage. Paracetamol is toxic to cats and should not be administered to them under any circumstance.

## Can my pet take paracetamol 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.

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

Side effects with paracetamol are rare but it can sometimes cause vomiting and diarrhoea. There is a risk of liver damage and it is therefore advisable to watch your dog for signs such as increased drinking, general fatigue or yellow colouration in the eyes. Your vet may also want to carry out blood tests. If your dog shows any unusual symptoms while taking this medication, please contact your vet.

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

If your dog is unwell while receiving medication, 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 dog's medicine, they should contact their doctor **immediately**. This leaflet along with any remaining medication and its containers (even if they are 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 dog's health, contact your own vet. They will know your dog's medical history and further information on paracetamol.

### 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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