



Medicine series

Practice details

Mitotane

- 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 mitotane. It may have a trade name such as Lysodren®, but often will just be called mitotane.

What is mitotane?

Mitotane belongs to a group of medicines called cytotoxic drugs. These drugs kill specific cells in the body and some are also able to kill cancer cells.

Why has my pet been prescribed mitotane?

Mitotane is used in dogs and cats to treat a condition called Cushing's disease or hyperadrenocorticism (HAC). This condition occurs when the adrenal glands are overproducing a hormone called cortisol. Abnormally high levels of cortisol result in a range of symptoms, including excessive drinking and urination, increased appetite, thinning of the skin, a pot-bellied appearance and hair loss. Mitotane is used to destroy cells of the adrenal glands and thus reduce cortisol levels back to normal. Currently, mitotane is only used when another drug, trilostane, has failed to treat Cushing's disease satisfactorily.

How should I store mitotane?

This medicine does not require special storage conditions. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

How do I give mitotane tablets to my pet?

Mitotane should be given with a meal. Try to disguise the tablet in a small quantity of strongly flavoured food that your pet likes. Alternatively, just before or after a meal, it can be placed carefully on the back of your pet's tongue and their mouth held closed until the entire dose has been swallowed. **Ensure gloves are worn when handling this drug.**

How long will my pet need to take mitotane?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients and may be for the rest of your pet's life. Any unused mitotane and empty containers should be returned to your veterinary practice for disposal.

What should I do if I run out of tablets?

Try not to run out. Make sure you order more tablets from your vet if your supply is getting low. 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 a dose is missed, 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, as an overdose of mitotane can be very serious and potentially life-threatening.

Can my pet take mitotane 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. Mitotane can rapidly change the insulin requirements of diabetic dogs and cats early in their treatment and therefore careful monitoring is required. Do not give your pet mitotane if they are already taking spironolactone (a drug used in some heart conditions) or phenobarbital (used to help manage epileptic fits).

What are the possible side effects of mitotane for my pet?

Mitotane may cause loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhoea and lethargy. These signs may be improved by giving steroids along with the mitotane (your vet can discuss this with you if the need arises). Very rarely, patients may show signs of incoordination (wobbliness), weakness and fits. If your pet shows any unusual symptoms whilst taking this medication, please contact your vet.

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

If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, you should not give any further doses and should contact your vet as soon as possible for advice.

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.

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

If a person accidentally takes your pet's tablets, the person should be taken to the local hospital **immediately**. Take this leaflet and any remaining tablets plus their container (even if it is empty) with you.

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 mitotane.