



Medicine series

Practice details

Desmopressin

- 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 desmopressin. It may have a trade name such as DDAVP, Desmospray or Desmotabs, but often will just be called desmopressin.

What is desmopressin?

Desmopressin is an antidiuretic medication – it reduces the production of urine in the kidneys. It is a synthetic analogue of an important hormone called vasopressin or antidiuretic hormone (ADH). Desmopressin acts on vasopressin receptors in the kidney cells to increase the reabsorption of water.

Why has my pet been prescribed desmopressin?

Desmopressin is used to diagnose and treat a condition called diabetes insipidus (a condition where your pet drinks and urinates excessively). Desmopressin is also occasionally used to treat dogs with bleeding associated with type 1 von Willebrand disease.

How should I store desmopressin?

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 desmopressin to my pet?

Desmopressin is available as tablets and as a nasal spray. Tablets can be given with a small quantity of strongly flavoured food that your pet likes. Alternatively, tablets can be placed carefully on the back of your pet's tongue and their mouth held closed until the entire dose has been swallowed. Wash hands thoroughly after handling.

The nasal spray can be administered intranasally or dropped on to your pet's conjunctiva. Your vet will advise you which route is most appropriate for your pet.

How long will my pet need to take desmopressin?

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 will depend on the reason for its use. Some pets will require lifelong medication. Any unused medication should be returned to your vet for safe disposal. Do not flush down the toilet or put into your household waste.

What should I do if I run out of desmopressin?

If you run out of desmopressin, contact your vet the next working day for advice. It may be that your vet has prescribed a course that has now come to an end as your pet does not need the treatment any more. It may be that your vet needs to examine your pet before more treatment is prescribed. Remember to take any empty containers with you when you go to see your vet.

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. An overdose of desmopressin can cause electrolyte disturbances, vomiting, depression, excessive salivation, wobbliness, muscle tremors and convulsions.

Can my pet take desmopressin 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 and off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop, pharmacy or health store.

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

Side effects from desmopressin are not common in cats and dogs. Your pet can develop water intoxication leading to low levels of sodium in the blood (a condition called hyponatraemia) if it continues to drink excessively. 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 desmopressin?

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.

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

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

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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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 desmopressin.

