



Anti-inflammatory pain relief (NSAIDs)

Overview

- Vets use anti-inflammatory pain relief medications (NSAIDs) to treat pain, inflammation, and high temperatures.
- There are many different types of NSAID available, and they come as tablets, capsules, liquid and eye drops.
- It's important to use NSAIDs carefully because, like any medication, they can sometimes cause side effects.

General information

Vets use anti-inflammatory pain relief medications (otherwise known as 'NSAIDs') to relieve pain, inflammation, and high temperatures. NSAIDs can be given by injection, tablet, capsule, liquid and as eye drops. There are many different types such as:

- **Meloxicam** (Metacam, Loxicom, Rheumocam, Infracam, Meloxaid and Meloxidyl)
- **Carprofen** (Canidryl, Rimadyl, Rimifin, Carprox, Carprieve, Carprodyl, and Rycarfa)
- **Robenacoxib** (Onsior)
- **Mavacoxib** (Trocoxil)
- **Cimicoxib** (Cimalgex)
- **Firocoxib** (Previcox, Firodyl)

Only give your pet NSAIDs prescribed for them, and never give them a human medicine without speaking to your vet first.

How and when to give NSAIDs

- Most NSAIDs are given once or twice daily (but this varies so always follow instructions from your vet/on the packet).



- It doesn't usually matter what time you give the medication as long as it's the same time each day (to maintain an even gap between doses).
- Always give NSAIDs with food (ideally with a meal).
- **In the case of an overdose, call your vet or the [animal poisons line](#) for advice.**

Side effects

It's important to use NSAIDs carefully, because like any medication, they have the potential to cause side effects (such as gut irritation and kidney problems). Fortunately, NSAID side effects are uncommon, usually mild, and resolve once the medication is stopped. Serious side effects due to an NSAID are rare. If your pet experiences any of the symptoms below while taking NSAIDs, stop their medication and contact your vet for advice:

- [Vomiting](#)
- [Diarrhoea](#)
- [Blood in poo \(bright red or very dark/black\)](#)
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- [Drinking or weeing more than usual](#)
- [A reduced appetite](#)

Fortunately, most pets that react to one NSAID can tolerate another type/brand without problems.

Which pets can/can't take NSAIDs?

NSAIDs shouldn't be given to:

- Young animals below 6-10 weeks old (the age is different for each type).
- Pets taking steroids.
- Pets already taking another type of NSAID.

NSAIDs should always be used very carefully in pets with kidney/liver/gut disease, so if your pet has a problem with any of these vital organs, your vet will give special instructions and warning signs to watch out for. **Never give your pet pain relief medication without speaking to your vet first.**



Cautions with other medicines

- Never give more than one type of NSAID at the same time because this makes side effects much more likely.
- NSAIDs can't be given with [steroids](#) because this increases the risk of serious side effects such as stomach ulcers.
- Fortunately, NSAIDs can be given with most other medications, but if your pet is taking anything else, it's best to check with your vet first.

FAQ's

Should I give NSAIDs with food?

Always give NSAIDs with food unless specifically advised by your vet. If your pet refuses to eat or has low appetite at the time they need their medication, contact your vet for advice.

Can I give my dog/cat ibuprofen or paracetamol?

No, never give your pet a human medicine unless your vet tells you to. Many human NSAIDs such as ibuprofen and naproxen are highly toxic to animals. Contact your vet or the [animal poisons line](#) immediately if your pet accidentally eats a human painkiller. In some cases, your vet may prescribe a human medication for your pet but they will only do this if they can prescribe a safe dose and there is no alternative designed for use in pets. Often, this will involve using a specific preparation of the medicine, which contains a safe amount of drug. **Never give your pet human medications unless it is prescribed by your vet.**

Can NSAIDs cause stomach ulcers?

Yes, although they are rare, stomach ulcers are one of the possible side effects of NSAIDs. They are most likely in the case of an overdose, in pets with existing stomach problems and in pets given more than one NSAID at the same time.

Can NSAIDs cause kidney problems?

Given over a long period, NSAIDs can have an impact on the kidneys. However, they are very important medications, and in most cases, when they



are given over a long period, the benefits are more valuable than the potential risk. Talk to your vet if you are concerned about your pet's kidneys.

Related conditions

- [Arthritis in Dogs](#)
- [Arthritis in Cats](#)
- [Limping and Stiffness in Dogs](#)
- [Limping and Stiffness in Cats](#)

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