

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)

Overview

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are medicines used to reduce high temperatures, swelling and pain. They can be used for both short term and long term conditions.

There are many different NSAIDs available and your vet will choose one that is most suitable for your pet.

NSAIDs should always be given with food to prevent damage to your pet's stomach.

Uses for NSAID's

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can be used for short term problems such as ear infections and for long term problems such as arthritis.

- Some common conditions NSAIDs might be used for include:
- Arthritis in dogs, cats and rabbits
- Sprain/strains
- After an operation
- Other painful problems like broken bones, and urine infections

How do NSAID's work?

Inflammation (swelling) sets in when the body becomes infected or injured, this isn't always a bad thing and can actually help the body heal.

If the inflammation becomes severe, causes pain or carries on for too long it starts to become more of a hindrance than a help. Too much inflammation can slow the healing process down. In these cases, using an anti-inflammatory drug can be very useful and enable the body to continue healing.

Side effects

Side effects of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) aren't very common but do occur from time to time. They include:

- **Damage to the tummy and guts**
NSAIDs can cause diarrhoea, vomiting and ulcers in the stomach and guts. For this reason it is important to always give NSAIDs with food.
- **Kidney damage and liver damage**
Anti-inflammatory drugs can take their toll on the kidneys and liver if they are given over a long period of time. Your vet might want to run some blood tests every 6-12 months to check.

Side effects of NSAIDs can be made a lot worse if they are given with certain other medicines, or if an overdose is given. Only ever give medications that have been prescribed by your vet and stick to the instructions that they have given you.

Side effects are also listed in the paper handout given with the medication so it's important to read this.

NSAIDs are extremely useful medications that have been used successfully for many years. Every medication has potential side effects and it's not always possible for your vet to predict whether your pet will be affected or not. Your vet will always try to minimise the risk and let you know what side effects to look out for. Speak to your vet if you are worried about the medication your pet is being given or think they are experiencing side effects.

When to contact your vet

Stop giving your pet their non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and contact your vet if you notice:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Blood in poo or vomit
- Very dark or black poo (digested blood)
- Tummy pain
- Drinking or weeing more than usual
- Not eating properly

You know your pet best. If they don't have the symptoms listed above but you are still concerned it's always best to contact your vet.

Should I give NSAIDs with or without food?

Always give non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) with food to prevent damage to your pet's stomach.

Can I give my pet ibuprofen or paracetamol?

No. Human non-steroidal anti-inflammatory and pain relief medications (including aspirin, paracetamol and ibuprofen) can poison pets. Only give your pet medications and drugs that have been prescribed by a vet.

If your pet accidentally eats any human medication contact your vet ASAP.

- Paracetamol can kill cats
- Ibuprofen can kill dogs



In some cases, a vet may prescribe a human medication for your pet. They will only do this if there is no alternative and they can prescribe a safe dose.

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