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## **Long term medication in cats and dogs**

Many pets suffer from chronic health conditions that cannot be cured but can be managed with daily medication.

How can I find out more information about the medication that my pet has been prescribed?

All medicines that are licensed for use in pets have an information leaflet included within the box of medication. This includes information from the manufacturer regarding the purpose of the medication, any possible side effects, and recommendations for monitoring pets taking this medication. If you cannot find this leaflet, please contact the surgery to ask for a replacement, or look it up online at [www.noahcompendium.co.uk](http://www.noahcompendium.co.uk).

In some situations, there are no suitable medications licensed for use in veterinary patients. If this is the case, veterinary surgeons are permitted to prescribe human medications for these pets. The system that authorises vets to prescribe these medications is known as the Prescribing Cascade. Vets have a 'formulary' (a book containing as much information as is widely known about the use of these medications in cats and dogs) to look up known uses and possible side effects of the drug and will be happy to share this information with you, but there is no official documentation relating to use in pets produced by the drug manufacturers. It is most common to have to use an unlicensed product when vets are treating an unusual condition, or an unusual species, because drug companies do not put their



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products through the expensive pet licensing system unless there is a large market for its use in veterinary patients. It is not permitted to prescribe a human medicine for a pet unless the vet can confirm that there is no suitable veterinary product available.

Some commonly used medications that are not licensed for use in pets are: chemotherapy drugs (e.g. vincristine, vinblastine), 'extra' pain relief (e.g. gabapentin, amitriptyline), eye drops (e.g. anti-allergy drops, antibiotic drops, drops to treat glaucoma), and medication to stop seizures in patients that do not respond to the standard epilepsy medications.

How often will the vet need to examine my pet on long term medication?

The veterinary surgeon looking after your pet is required to examine your pet as frequently as is necessary to ensure that:

1. the medication is working successfully and is being given at the correct dose any side effects can be detected and addressed promptly
3. the medication is being used in accordance with the manufacturer's safety guidelines

The interval between examinations will vary with the condition, patient and medication being used. It is common for patients to be examined fairly frequently at the start of a course of medication, with check-ups becoming less frequent as time goes on. Please ask your veterinary surgeon if you are not sure when your next recommended check-up is due.



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Patients that are considered to be stable and at low risk of complications from their illness and their medication will still need to be checked by a veterinary surgeon every 6 months as a minimum. The only exception is for flea and worm medication, in which case the minimum interval for examination is 12 months. The cost of a medication check-up is priced at a standard consult fee.

How do I request ongoing supplies of medication for my pet?

Medication can be requested from your veterinary surgeon during a consultation.

If your pet is running out of medication but is not yet due a check-up, you may request additional medication by completing the online repeat prescription form. This can be found at <https://www.acornhousevets.co.uk/RepeatPrescriptions1601.html>

Please allow 2 working days between making your request and collecting your medication.

If you are unable to use the online repeat prescription form you may order a repeat prescription by telephoning the practice or attending the desk in person. We are always happy to assist those that are unable to use the online system, however, we would ask that the online system is used if at all possible. This helps us to keep telephone lines free for urgent medical cases and to avoid errors that can occur when requesting medications verbally rather than in writing.



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Is there any medical testing that should be carried out for dogs on long term medication?

It is recommended that **all** patients on **any** long-term medication have haematology and biochemistry blood tests and a urine test checked annually. The tests check red and white blood cell counts, kidney and liver health, protein, salt and sugar levels. This testing allows your vet to make a much more thorough assessment of your pet's health when checking that it is safe and appropriate for your pet to continue to take their medication.

For some medical conditions and some medications more frequent testing is required, or additional tests are required. The following table is in addition to the annual blood and urine tests mentioned	Recommended testing	Additional information



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above. Medication		
Hyperthyroid medication	Blood tests for: 1.Haematology (red and white cells) 2.Biochemistry (organ function) 3.Thyroid level every 3 months	Blood tests can be taken at any time of day, but the pet should not have missed any medication doses in the previous 3 weeks.
Hypothyroid medication	Blood tests for thyroid level every 6 months	The thyroid blood test should be taken 3-4 hours after the medication has been given that day
Onsior anti-inflammatory	Blood tests for liver at 2, 4 and 8 weeks after starting the medication; then haematology and biochemistry blood testing every 6 months.	
Phenobarbital	Blood phenobarbital level every 6 months once stable in dogs (more often in initial stabilisation period). Once cats are	Blood test should be taken 1-2 hours before the next



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	stable, it is not essential to test this level unless there is a change in the medical situation.	dose of medication is due.
Insulin	Blood tests for Fructosamine (average blood sugar) every 6 months	This test may need to be carried out more often when patients are unstable; or less often if clients are doing blood sugar testing at home.
Trilostane/ Vetoryl	Blood test for cortisol level and urine concentration test after 10 days of treatment and then every 3 months.	The blood and urine test should be taken just before the next dose is due (withhold morning