

Don't Chase Your Tail With Pet Rx's

You're in a key spot to **keep your furry patients safe when dispensing human meds for pets.**

Ensure the animal's profile is set up according to your pharmacy's policy. For example, you may need to add "K9" or "feline" to their name...or use a "species code."

Avoid dispensing pet Rx's under the owner's name and DOB. This can lead to confusion or possible fraud if billed to the owner's insurance.

Ensure pet profiles are updated with current weight...since many pet meds are weight-based (cetirizine, famotidine, etc).

Watch for pet prescribing nuances. For instance, liquid Rx strengths are more commonly written as "mg/mL"...versus "mg/5 mL."

Ask for specific species and breed...dosing and safety can vary.

For example, dogs can take prednisone, but it may not be effective in cats...since they can't convert prednisone to active prednisolone.

And loperamide is toxic to many herding breeds (collies, shepherds, etc) that can't break it down.

Don't rely on your computer interaction checker for pets...and reach out to the vet for questions. Some common problematic interactions in humans (clopidogrel/omeprazole, etc) aren't an issue in some animals.

Stay alert with switches between pet and human meds. For instance, human insulins have higher concentrations (100 units/mL, etc)...while pet insulins are lower (40 units/mL, etc).

Check previously filled controlled med Rx's for pets. Stay alert for signs of potential drug diversion by owners...multiple vet prescribers, several pets getting controlled Rx's, owners prescribed the same Rx, lost meds, etc.

Refer owners to their vet if they ask about OTCs...since human NSAIDs, acetaminophen, and others can be fatal to cats or dogs.

If people ask about supplements, direct them to pet-specific products when possible. Human versions may contain toxic ingredients.

For example, xylitol is okay in cats...but can cause fatal hypoglycemia and severe liver failure in dogs. And propylene glycol can cause fatal anemias in cats.

Pounce on our FAQ, Med Considerations for Cats and Dogs, for guidance on pet dosing, poison control strategies, and more.

Key References:

- Budde JA, McCluskey DM, Eds. Plumb's Veterinary Drug Handbook. 10th ed. Wiley, 2023.
- Merck Manual: Veterinary Manual. <https://www.merckvetmanual.com/> (Accessed October 26, 2024).
- Budde JA, McCluskey D. A pharmacist's guide to filling veterinary prescriptions. 2021. https://cdn.brief.vet/plumbs/marketing-site/documents/PVD_Pharmacists_Guide_2021.pdf (Accessed October 26, 2024).

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