

Pain Medications for DOGS AND CATS

These medications are often used after acute injury and surgery but are also used intermittently for chronic conditions or daily for palliative care.

For minor pain, one of these medications may be prescribed. For more severe pain, these medications may be prescribed in combinations to provide a greater pain relief.

Non- Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAID) include:

- **Meloxicam/Metacam:** great at low dosages for cats (liquid)
- **Carprofen/ Rimadyl:** lower cost, may be doses once or twice daily for dogs
- **Firocoxib/ Previcox:** may have lower GI side effects for sensitive dogs, dosed up to once a day
- **Grapiprant/ Galliprant:** considered to be safer for dogs that have kidney or liver compromise, also dosed up to once a day

All NSAID's may cause GI upset, stop medication if not eating or vomiting occur. If used long- term, bloodwork to monitor kidney and live function should be preformed once or twice a year.

Gabapentin: This medication is used for nerve pain in humans and has a wide safety margin in dogs and cats. It is often used to calm cats prior to veterinary visits to prevent stress. Capsules may be broken open and placed on food. Dose range is variable, start slow and increase. The most common side effect is calming/mild sedation. Lower doses might be used in the morning, higher doses at night. Prescriptions for up to one week may be dispensed directly by veterinary clinics, further refills must be called into a pharmacy.

Tramadol: This is a synthetic opioid and a controlled substance. Care should be taken if used in households with vulnerable individuals. Disposal of unused prescriptions at specific sites is required. It is expected to work well for up to five days in dogs and cats. After five days, it is expected to lose its efficacy. For long-term palliative care, it likely works better if used intermittently. Prescriptions for up to one week may be dispensed by veterinary clinics, further refills must be called into a pharmacy. For long-term palliative care, a treatment plan must be formulated by a veterinarian and regular rechecks are required. The most common side effect is calming/sedation: constipation may also occur.

The Layering Effect: The use of supplements increases daily comfort and may reduce the frequency and amount of pain medication needed. If pain medication is needed using the following supplements increase efficacy and provide greater relief. Supplements may be used singly or in combination. Often combinations provide greater relief.

- **Adequan, polysulfated glycosaminogly cans:** an injectable medication used as a joint supplement may provide pain relief in dogs and cats with very few side effects.
- **Dasuquin with MSM and Dasuquin Advanced:** a joint supplement for dogs and cats, the joint supplement recommended most frequently by veterinarians.
- **Omega 3 Fatty Acids:** provide anti-inflammatory effects to the joints, may be helpful to many body systems, including skin, heart, brain, and the immune system
- **Weight loss:** for overweight pets, is the single most important strategy for a longer, more comfortable life. Some prescription diets may be helpful.
- **Laser Therapy:** effects include improved healing time, pain reduction, increased circulation and decreased swelling. (Summus)