

# Dantrolene

- Keep this leaflet safe, as you may need to refer to it again.
- Please ask your vet or veterinary nurse if you have any further questions.
- This medicine has been prescribed for *your* pet ONLY. Do not take it yourself or give it to another person or any other animal; it may harm them even if their symptoms appear to be the same.

The medicine you have been given for your dog or cat is called dantrolene. It may have a trade name such as Dantrium®, but often will just be called dantrolene.

## What is dantrolene?

Dantrolene is a muscle relaxant. It is specifically used to relax muscles that are under conscious control, including leg muscles and the muscles of the urethra.

## Why has my pet been prescribed dantrolene?

Dantrolene is used to relax muscles that are in spasm. Urethral spasm is one possible reason for a dog or cat to have difficulty urinating and, therefore, dantrolene helps the patient to urinate more easily. Dantrolene can also be used to treat a condition called malignant hyperthermia, where widespread muscle contraction causes a dangerous and, sometimes life-threatening, increase in body temperature. This condition is very rare and is triggered by exposure to certain drugs, such as anaesthetic agents.

## How should I store dantrolene?

This medicine should be stored at room temperature and away from excess heat and moisture. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

## How do I give dantrolene capsules to my pet?

Try to disguise the capsules in a small quantity of a strongly flavoured food that your pet likes. Alternatively, they can be placed carefully on the back of your pet's tongue and their mouth held closed until the entire dose has been swallowed. Ensure that plenty of fresh water is available.

## How long will my pet need to take dantrolene?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients. Do not stop giving dantrolene to your pet unless instructed to do so by your vet.

## What should I do if I run out of capsules?

Try not to run out of dantrolene. Make sure you order more dantrolene from your vet if your supply is getting low. Missing a dose may cause signs of your pet's disease to return. If you do run out, contact your own vet for further advice and restart the course as soon as possible.

## What should I do if I miss a dose?

If a dose is missed, give the medication as soon as possible. However, it is best to skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your pet's next scheduled dose. **DO NOT** give a double dose to make up for the missed dose and do not exceed the total stated dose in any one 24-hour period.

## What should I do if my pet is accidentally given too many doses?

**Contact your vet immediately** if your pet receives an overdose of dantrolene as higher doses increase the risk of side effects.

## Can my pet take dantrolene if I am already giving them other drugs?

Tell your vet if you are giving your pet any other medications, even if you think they know. This includes herbal and off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop or pharmacy. Drugs such as calcium-channel blockers (e.g. amlodipine or diltiazem) can increase the effect of dantrolene and so should not be given together.

## What are the possible side effects of dantrolene for my pet?

Dantrolene may cause signs of muscle weakness (poor exercise tolerance, unsteadiness on legs, collapse). Long term use may lead to liver problems. A build up fluid in the chest (pleural effusion) may be seen. This can lead to an altered pattern of breathing (more rapid than usual) and poor exercise tolerance. If your pet shows

any unusual symptoms whilst taking this medication, please contact your vet.

## What should I do if my pet is unwell while taking dantrolene?

If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, you should not give further doses and should contact your vet as soon as possible for advice.

## What should I do if a person accidentally takes this drug?

If a person accidentally takes your pet's medicine, the person should be taken to the local hospital **immediately**. Take this leaflet and any remaining tablets plus their container (even if it is empty) with you.

## Whom do I contact if I want to know more?

If you have any questions about this drug, or concerns about your pet's health, contact your own vet. They will know your pet's medical history and will know about dantrolene.

### The Prescribing Cascade

This medicine is authorized for use in human patients and is used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. The medicine is not authorized by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), for use in dogs/cats/pets. Your vet can explain the 'prescribing cascade' in further detail to you and also explain why they are prescribing this drug for your pet. You will be asked to sign a consent form stating that you understand the reasons that the drug is being prescribed and its possible complications, before the treatment is issued.

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