



Medicine series

Practice details

Erythromycin

- 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 erythromycin. It may have a trade name such as Erythrocin[®], Erythroped[®] or Erymax[®], but often will just be called erythromycin.

What is erythromycin?

Erythromycin is a type of antibiotic that belongs to the subgroup called macrolides. It is effective against a range of different bacteria.

Why has my pet been prescribed erythromycin?

Erythromycin is used in veterinary patients to treat some infections caused by bacteria and also by *Campylobacter* (a bacteria-like microorganism). It is a very useful drug because it is able to reach tissues of the body that other antibiotics cannot, such as the prostate gland. Erythromycin also stimulates normal gut movements.

How should I store erythromycin?

This medicine does not require special storage conditions. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

How do I give erythromycin tablets, capsules or suspension to my pet?

Erythromycin is best given on an empty stomach about 1 hour before your pet's main meal. Try to disguise the medication in a *small* amount of strongly flavoured food that your pet likes. Alternatively, it can be placed carefully on the back of your pet's tongue and their mouth held closed until the entire dose has been swallowed.

How long will my pet need to take erythromycin?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients. Any unused medication should be returned to your vet for safe disposal. Do not flush it down the toilet or put it into your household waste.

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?

One extra dose is unlikely to hurt your pet. However, contact your vet if a large overdose is given. The most likely signs are vomiting, diarrhoea and loss of appetite.

Can my pet take erythromycin 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 already know. This includes herbal or off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop, pharmacy or health store. Do not give your pet erythromycin if they are already taking other antibiotics of the macrolide, lincosamide or chloramphenicol groups. Digoxin (used in some heart conditions), methylprednisolone (used for skin conditions) and theophylline (used in respiratory disease) should also be avoided or used with great care alongside erythromycin. Other drugs that should not be given to pets taking erythromycin because of potential interactions include sodium valproate, colchicine, sildenafil, cimetidine, ciclosporin, cisapride and terbinafine. If you have any concerns about using erythromycin with other medications, please ask your vet for further advice.

What are the possible side effects of erythromycin for my pet?

Erythromycin can, quite commonly, cause vomiting or diarrhoea. Small amounts of food given with the medication may help reduce these side effects. 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 erythromycin?

If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, you should not give any 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, capsules or suspension 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 erythromycin.

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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