

OFF – LICENCE MEDICINE USE

There are certain situations where the best treatment for your pet may require the use of medicines which do not hold an appropriate licence for the species concerned. In this case we might therefore recommend using such a medicine "off-licence" but these will be prescribed in accordance with the cascade.

The cascade is a sequence that all veterinary surgeons must follow when treating animals. Each vet must firstly look for

- alternative medicines that are used in other animal species for the same condition,
- then medicines for different conditions in the same species
- finally medication authorized for human use.

There are a lot of human medicines that are extremely useful in the treatment of pets. Most of these medicines have been in general veterinary use for years, for example anti-histamines, adrenaline, aspirin, digoxin, diazepam and pain killers etc. Most of these off-licence medicines are widely used in the veterinary field; there are documented dose rates and they are known to be safe. Our use of off-licence medication will be based upon our knowledge of the use in animals and an assessment of the risks and benefits involved. These medicines will only be used when they are indicated and deemed necessary and no licensed alternative exists.

Due to the cost of obtaining a licence for full use in a particular species, there are only a few drugs actually licensed for use in the smaller and exotic pets (e.g. rabbits, birds etc.) The consent form we will ask you to sign for treatments for your pets gives a life-long agreement for the use of unlicensed products (to save you having to sign a form every time your pet is treated). If you require further re-assurance about these new consent forms please ask to speak to one of the Vets.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Any drug dispensed (whether on or off-licence) will be dispensed with instructions for usage and, if applicable, special storage
- Please handle all drugs carefully (particularly if you know yourself to be allergic to some drugs)
- Keep out of the reach of children.
- If you have any medication left over we will be happy to dispose of it safely at no cost to you

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