Aspirin

How Is This Medication Useful?

- Aspirin is used to treat pain, fever and to thin the blood in virtually all species of animals. It is used most commonly in animals to thin the blood to prevent blood clots. It is not used very commonly for pain as there are many other drugs that are safer and more effective than aspirin to treat pain in animals.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?

- Aspirin should be used very carefully in cats, only under the guidance and supervision of a veterinarian. Cats do not have the enzymes necessary to break down aspirin and rid it from the body.
- Aspirin is detoxified in the liver and the kidney and should be used very carefully in animals with liver or kidney problems.
- Aspirin thins the blood and should not be used in animals for at least one week prior to surgery. It should also be used with caution in animals who have bleeding tendencies or are anemic.
- Aspirin can also worsen ulcers and should not be used in animals with a history of ulcers.
- It has been shown to delay birth and should not be given to animals in the last stages of pregnancy.
- If your animal has any of the above conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks of using the medication versus the benefits that it might have.

What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?

- Aspirin can reduce the flow of blood to the stomach and intestines and can result in stomach pain and ulcers. Early signs of this adverse effect are vomiting, diarrhea or reluctance to eat. Giving aspirin with food can decrease the severity of these effects. Signs that aspirin is causing blood loss are black stools or vomit that looks like coffee grounds.
- Aspirin can also cause increases in blood sugar and should be used carefully in diabetic animals.
- If your pet shows any of these signs, contact your veterinarian immediately.

How Should It Be Given?

- The successful outcome of your animal’s treatment with this medication depends upon your commitment and ability to administer it exactly as the veterinarian has prescribed. Please do not skip doses or stop giving the medication. If you have difficulty giving doses consult your veterinarian or pharmacist who can offer administration techniques or change the dosage form to a type of medication that may be more acceptable to you and your animal.
- Some other drugs can interact with this medication so tell your veterinarian about any drugs or foods that you currently give your animal. Drugs that decrease the acidity of the urine can decrease the effects of aspirin and drugs that increase the acidity of the urine can cause aspirin to become toxic. Other painkillers, fever medications and blood thinners should not generally be used at the same time as aspirin. Buffered aspirin may bind some antibiotics and may prevent them from working. Enteric coated aspirin is not usually effective in dogs and cats. Do not give new foods or medications without first asking your veterinarian.
- **Dogs and Cats:** Dogs usually receive aspirin two to three times daily. Cats rarely receive aspirin because they have great difficulties breaking it down and eliminating it. When used in cats, aspirin is usually given in small doses only once every two or three days.
- **Horses:** Horses usually get aspirin twice daily at first and then once it has achieved the desired effect the dose can be dropped to once daily.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

- Animals receiving this medication will need to be monitored carefully by their veterinarian to make sure there are no ill effects on the blood or intestinal tract.
- Aspirin should be stored in light-resistant, airtight containers. Once aspirin takes on a vinegar-like odor, it will no longer achieve the desired effects.
- **Dogs and Cats:** Aspirin should be used only under the guidance of a veterinarian in dogs and cats.
- **Horses:** The use of aspirin is prohibited in horses that are racing or showing during therapy.