![BSAVA — BRITISH SMALL ANIMAL VETERINARY ASSOCIATION]

CLIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET
Updated: **March 2020**

Mirtazapine

- **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 mirtazapine. It may have a trade name such as Zispin®, but often will just be called mirtazapine.

What is mirtazapine?
Mirtazapine belongs to a group of medicines that are called *tricyclic antidepressants*. Mirtazapine stimulates appetite and can relieve apparent nausea. It exerts these effects by acting on nerve endings in the brain and intestine, leading to changes in serotonin levels.

Why has my pet been prescribed mirtazapine?
Mirtazapine is used to treat nausea and increase appetite. These symptoms can occur with a range of diseases, including kidney failure, cancer, liver problems, stomach and intestinal problems, and pancreatitis. Mirtazapine can also be used to alleviate the nausea/appetite loss that can occur with chemotherapy.

How should I store mirtazapine?
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 mirtazapine tablets to my pet?
Mirtazapine is available in a standard tablet or a tablet that rapidly dissolves in water and as a liquid. Try to disguise mirtazapine in a 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. Ensure that plenty of fresh water is available.

How long will my pet need to take mirtazapine?
Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients.

What should I do if I run out of tablets?
Try not to run out of mirtazapine. Make sure you order more from your vet if your supply is getting low. 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. **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 mirtazapine as higher doses increase the risk of side effects.

Can my pet take mirtazapine 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. In people, mirtazapine can interact with a number of drugs, most notably other antidepressants. In addition, there can be interactions with some antacids (e.g. cimetidine) and diazepam (e.g. Valium). Concurrent use with tramadol can also increase the risk of side effects.

What are the possible side effects of mirtazapine for my pet?
Mirtazapine may make your pet drowsy. If your pet shows signs of jaundice (yellow discoloration of the whites of the eyes, gums or skin), *STOP treatment immediately and contact your vet*. Occasionally, undesirable effects of the appetite stimulation may be seen, such as increased stealing and begging for food. Some pets may develop *serotonin syndrome* (high body temperature, difficulty in breathing, hyperactivity, tremors, shivering and wide pupils). If your pet shows *any* unusual symptoms whilst taking this medication, *please contact your vet immediately.*

What should I do if my pet is unwell while taking mirtazapine?
If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, you should not give any further doses and 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 mirtazapine.