



Medicine series

Practice details

Fluoxetine

- 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 pet is called fluoxetine. It may have a trade name such as, Prozac®, Prozep®, Olena® or Oxactin®, but often will just be called fluoxetine.

What is fluoxetine?

Fluoxetine is an antidepressant medication belonging to a class of drugs known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). It works by boosting a natural substance in the brain called serotonin, which is involved in the regulation of mood, anxiety, sleep, appetite and energy levels.

Why has my pet been prescribed fluoxetine?

The anti-anxiety and mood-regulating properties of this drug make it particularly suitable for the treatment of separation anxiety and some forms of aggression, in association with a behaviour modification plan. Fluoxetine can also be used to manage obsessive-compulsive disorders (e.g. over-grooming in cats) and to reduce behavioural impulsivity.

How should I store fluoxetine?

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

How do I give fluoxetine to my pet?

Fluoxetine is available as tablets or a liquid formulation. Tablets may be disguised in a small amount of strongly flavoured food that your pet likes. Alternatively, the medicine can be gently squirted into the side of your pet's mouth or the tablets can be placed carefully on the back of your pet's tongue and their mouth closed until the entire dose has been swallowed.

How long will my pet need to take fluoxetine?

The duration of administration depends on the condition being treated, the response to medication and the development of any adverse side effects. Pets normally require treatment for a number of weeks before any effects of the medication are seen. Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients and can be for the rest of their life.

What should I do if I run out of fluoxetine?

Try not to run out. 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. 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 an overdose is given, since it can be fatal. The most common side effects with an overdose are lethargy, drooling, agitation and, in some cases, seizures.

Can my pet take fluoxetine 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 and off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop, pharmacy or health store. Fluoxetine may interact with a range of medications and your vet will advise you on the safety of giving multiple medications. Fluoxetine should not be used with certain other antidepressant medications, especially monoamine oxidase inhibitors (e.g. selegiline). In some cases, these medications should not be given within 6 weeks of one another. It is not recommended that fluoxetine be used concurrently with anti-seizure medications. Care should be taken when giving fluoxetine and anticoagulant medications (e.g. aspirin) as there may be an increased risk of bleeding in the case of trauma. If you have any concerns about using fluoxetine with other medications, please ask your vet for further advice.

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

Side effects include drowsiness, decreased appetite, vomiting and diarrhoea. Trembling, anxiety, restlessness and irritability may also be seen. In rare cases, there is a possibility of an increase in aggression in response to fluoxetine. If your pet experiences an allergic reaction to the medication, side effects may include facial swelling, hives, vomiting and seizures. If your pet shows *any* unusual symptoms whilst taking this medication, please contact your vet.

The Prescribing Cascade

This medicine is authorized for use in human patients and certain forms are authorized for use in pets for certain conditions. It is also used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. 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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What should I do if my pet is unwell while taking fluoxetine?

If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, you should not give any further doses and should contact your vet **immediately** for advice.

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

If a person takes your pet's medication, the person should be taken to the local hospital **immediately**. This leaflet along with any remaining medication and its containers (even if they are empty) should be taken with them.

Whom do I contact if I want to know more?

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