



Medicine series

Practice details

Acetylcysteine

- 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 acetylcysteine. It may have a trade name such as Ilube or Parvolex, but often will just be called acetylcysteine.

What is acetylcysteine?

Acetylcysteine is a medication that has a variety of uses ranging from treating paracetamol (acetaminophen) overdose, to loosening thick mucus in the respiratory tract or in the treatment of 'dry eye' (keratoconjunctivitis sicca).

Why has my pet been prescribed acetylcysteine?

Your pet has been prescribed acetylcysteine for the treatment of 'dry eye' to help to reduce desiccation of the eye seen in this condition.

How should I store acetylcysteine?

Acetylcysteine eye drops come as a bottled solution. The drops are fine to be stored at room temperature, away from light. For safety, *all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.*

How do I give acetylcysteine eye drops to my pet?

Topical eye treatments are not painful for your pet but the sensation of drops/ointment touching the eye may be unpleasant. Try to administer the drops just before feeding or other normal activities your pet enjoys. Gently push your pet's head upwards using a thumb under the bottom jaw, hold the top eyelid open with the first finger of the same hand. Holding the bottle containing the eye drops in the other hand, direct the nozzle towards the eye, keeping it at an angle so as not to directly poke the eye, and administer the prescribed dose. Hold your pet's head in this upward position for a few seconds to allow the eye drops to be absorbed. It is important to reinforce your pet's good behaviour with lots of praise and stroking.

How long will my pet need to take acetylcysteine?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients. It is important that you complete the course of treatment even if your pet seems to be well. If your pet is still unwell at the end of the course then you should contact your vet as soon as possible.

What should I do if I run out of acetylcysteine?

Try to ensure that you have enough medication in advance of it running out. However, 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 you miss a dose, 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 your pet receives an overdose of acetylcysteine. However, if a single extra dose is given on a single occasion only, it is unlikely to cause any significant problems.

Can my pet take acetylcysteine 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.

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

The skin around the eyes may become sore and the eyes may appear swollen, red and itchy — this is usually seen when drops are used for long periods or in excessive quantities. Other possible side effects, again usually associated with overuse or prolonged use, are nausea and vomiting.

What should I do if my pet is unwell while taking acetylcysteine?

If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, the eye is becoming particularly irritated or the eye does not open, you should contact your vet as soon as possible for advice.

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

If a person accidentally takes your pet's medicine, they should contact their doctor **immediately**. This leaflet along with any remaining medication and its container (even if it is 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 concerns about your pet's health, contact your own vet. They will know your pet's medical history and further information on acetylcysteine.