Canine Anti-Inflammatory (NSAID) Information Sheet

The veterinarian has prescribed a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) for your dog today. This category of medications includes Rimadyl, Carprofen and Metacam, which are only available by prescription through your veterinarian. These drugs are generally used to treat pain and inflammation, most often associated with arthritis, injuries, or surgery.

These medications are widely used in veterinary medicine, and are generally very safe and effective in treating pain. As with any medication, however, there is a potential for adverse effects. With any NSAID, there is a potential for side effects involving the digestive tract (such as bleeding ulcers), liver, or kidneys. Signs of an adverse reaction can include decreased appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, dark or tarry stools, increased water consumption, increased urination, pale gums due to anemia, yellowing of gums, skin or white of the eye due to jaundice, lethargy, incoordination, seizure or behavioral changes.

Serious adverse reactions associated with this drug class can occur with or without warning and in rare situations result in death. If any of the above signs are noted, it is important to discontinue the medication and contact us right away.

NSAID medications should not be given with other NSAIDs (including aspirin) or steroids (for example, prednisone, cortisone, dexamethasone or triamcinolone). Please make sure your veterinarian is aware of all medications you are giving your dog or plan to give while taking an NSAID. It is also important to notify us about any previous adverse reactions to medications, liver/kidney disease, or bleeding disorders. Contact us right away if your dog eats more than the prescribed amount of his/her medication.

It is strongly recommended that all dogs starting long-term treatment with an NSAID have bloodwork done prior to beginning this medication. This is important because it not only ensures that the organs are healthy enough for the dog to take this medication, but also gives us a baseline in order to monitor for any changes as treatment continues. Bloodwork is typically rechecked 2 weeks after starting the medication, and then is monitored once a year if therapy continues.