



Specialty Medicine Compounding Pharmacy

116 N Lafayette, Suite B
South Lyon, MI 48178

Competent Compounding

Phone: (248) 446-2643
Toll Free: (886) 446-2643
Fax: (248) 486-1906
www.specialty-medicine.com

David Campbell, PharmD (cand) February 2008

Veterinary Corner: Feline Hypertension

High blood pressure is a widespread condition that affects numerous individuals and can contribute to heart disease. In 1999–2002, 28.6% of the U.S. population had hypertension with the numbers continually rising despite advancements in drug therapy. Unfortunately, this is not solely a problem for humans. Hypertension in our feline companions is also on the rise and may lead to serious problems such as blindness, kidney failure, blood clots, and heart failure. As our cats are living longer lives, it is difficult to diagnose hypertension because it has no early symptoms. Blindness is becoming very common in cats that are left untreated.

Hypertension is divided into 2 types; primary and secondary hypertension. Primary hypertension is defined as having no known underlying cause while secondary hypertension has a suspected cause. Most cats develop secondary hypertension from hyperthyroidism (increase in thyroid hormones) or kidney failure.

Combating hypertension is extremely important for the well-being of your pet. It is first important to diagnose the disease. Older cats that have racing heart rates and blindness give strong signs of hypertension. In addition, it is suspected in cats that have been diagnosed with hyperthyroidism, kidney disease, and heart disease. Monitoring blood pressure can be difficult because cat arteries are very small and only a special blood pressure monitor will work to obtain an accurate reading. If your cat has secondary hypertension, treatment of the underlying cause is important. A cat with hyperthyroidism will begin an anti-thyroid medication such as methimazole. Medications that will specifically treat your cat's high blood pressure include: ACE inhibitors such as Vasotec (enalapril), beta-blockers such as Interdal (propranolol), and calcium channel blockers like Norvasc (amlodipine). Diuretics (Lasix) and vasodilators (hydralazine) are also used. All of these medications can be custom prepared and flavored for veterinary use at a compounding pharmacy.

Blind cats need to be placed on Norvasc to rapidly lower their blood pressure because there is a chance that the cat can regain sight if the drug is implemented as soon as blindness is noted. Cats that are on this drug should have their kidneys monitored 2 weeks after starting, then every 3 months.

The best treatment for hypertension and its associated blindness is prevention. Any cat over the age of 8, diagnosed with kidney disease, diabetes mellitus or hyperthyroidism, should be monitored periodically for hypertension. This early diagnosis will allow treatment to begin before damage occurs.

All pets with hypertension should have their blood pressure checked every 3 months. Blood panels, thyroid tests, urinalysis, and eye exams should be performed every 3-6 months.

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus infections (MRSA): Can your pets be a source?

MRSA has been extensively covered in the media over recent months due to its increasing incidence in the community. MRSA is a resistant bacterium that is not treated effectively by many of our most common antibiotics such as amoxicillin. MRSA infections usually cause minor skin infections such as boils and pimples that are easily treated by drainage procedures. However, more serious infections have been shown to occur including cellulites and pneumonia. MRSA infections occur mostly in hospitalized patients due to the presence of many sick patients. Many questions have arisen as to why these infections are occurring outside of the hospital at such an alarming rate. Most people attribute this to the increased unwarranted use of antibiotics. The bacteria then learn how to overcome these drugs and produce resistant genes. The question still remains, how do these resistant germs make it into our household?

MRSA is usually spread by direct physical contact with infected individuals or objects. Unfortunately, there have been reports of MRSA spread from family pets such as dogs, cats, rabbits, horses, pigs, cattle and birds. These animals can carry MRSA without symptoms, making it easy for pet owners to not notice an active infection. The bacterium is spread through daily contact and can also be spread from infected humans to their pets as well. Infections typically present as a small crusty lesion. Vets can take samples of this lesion to identify the bacteria. Animals generally deal with MRSA more efficiently than humans, however, your pet will still need to be monitored and treated accordingly. The best way to prevent MRSA infection is to practice proper hygiene. Always wash your hands after handling or changing bedding. Hand washing should be performed using hot water and soap with vigorous scrubbing for at least thirty seconds. Keeping your pet's habitat and bedding clean is also important to prevent the spread of infection. Remember, prevention is the number one treatment!