



Specialty Medicine Compounding Pharmacy

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Competent Compounding

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Samer Dinno, PharmD (cand) September 2009

What is Canine Epilepsy?

Epilepsy is a disorder characterized by repeated seizures over a period of time. Epilepsy affects both humans and animals. It is much more common in dogs than cats. It is not clear how common it really is in canines but some studies estimate up to 4% of all dogs are affected.

Seizures usually happen when an “electrical storm” develops in the brain. For a number of reasons, neurons in the brain will fire excessively and subsequently cause changes in the behavior and movement of the animal, which we recognize as a seizure. On the other hand, some types of seizures are brought on by lack of neuron activity in the brain, but those do not usually affect dogs.

Most seizures happen when the dog is relaxed and quiet and may even occur during sleep. Seizures that happen when the animal is physically excited could indicate other problems such as heart problems or low blood sugar. Epilepsy is an inherited disease but may also be caused by toxins, certain metabolic states or brain injury. Generalized tonic-clonic, simple partial and complex partial seizures are the most common types that affect dogs.

During a generalized, tonic-clonic seizure, the muscles will stiffen up and the animal usually falls to its side. Chomping of the jaws and jerking of the limbs will then follow. During one of these seizures, the animal will be unconscious and will not feel any pain. They will also lose control of their bladder and bowels. This type of seizure will generally last less than two minutes. However, the animal will generally experience post-ictal behavior over the next few hours after a seizure. This is characterized by depressed mood, confusion, disorientation, lack of coordination, and sometimes aggression.

Partial seizures originate in a specific area of the brain and will usually only affect a certain area of functioning in the animal but can sometimes progress to a generalized, tonic-clonic seizure. Partial seizures can be simple or complex. Simple partial seizures will often affect the motor functioning of the dog where twitching or blinking of the face is the most common characteristic. Complex partial seizures will affect the animal’s behavior. For example the dog may run uncontrollably or engage in senseless, repetitive behavior.

Here at SMCP we compound a number of different medications for treating this disorder. Some of the most common ones include potassium bromide, phenobarbital, and diazepam, which are generally formulated in capsules, liquids, suppositories or gels.

Feel free to contact us for more information about treatment options.

Novel H1N1 Influenza “Swine Flu”

Novel influenza A (H1N1), otherwise known as swine flu, is a new flu virus that is genetically different from other human influenza strains. The virus was first thought to originate from pig (swine) influenza. Further testing has since shown that the virus shares genetic similarities to swine, avian and human strains of influenza viruses. Novel H1N1 first caused illness in the U.S. in April 2009.

Novel H1N1 flu is spread in the same manner as regular influenza. Being in contact with respiratory droplet through coughing and sneezing of infected individuals is the main way to catch the flu; however, it is also possible to be infected through touching of infected objects and then touching your nose or mouth. Signs and symptoms of H1N1 infection are the same as typical flu symptoms experienced with seasonal influenza infection.



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	Cold	Flu
Symptom Onset	Gradually	Within hours
Fever	Rare	Common
Chills	Uncommon	Common
Coughing	Hacking cough	Dry cough
Sneezing	Common	Uncommon
Runny Nose	Sometimes	Common
Stuffy Nose	Common	Uncommon
Sore Throat	Common	Uncommon
Aches/Pain	Mild	Yes, often severe
Headache	Uncommon	Common

Each year, the seasonal flu virus causes about 36,000 deaths and over 200,000 hospitalizations. About 90% of those deaths are in those 65 or older. However, the novel H1N1 flu outbreak has spared the elderly population and has targeted a younger population. Persons 24 years or younger are at a greater risk of getting the novel H1N1 flu than those 65 years or older. Pregnant women and adults 24-64 with chronic diseases such as immune system deficiency, diabetes, heart failure or asthma are also at a greater risk of infection.

The Vaccine

The novel influenza A (H1N1) vaccine is not yet available in the U.S. There are currently several ongoing clinical trials evaluating its safety and effectiveness. Both a shot and a nasal spray is being developed and they are expected to be on the market by late October. It is not yet confirmed, but there may be a need for two doses of the vaccine to be given at least 21 days apart to develop adequate immunity. Results from clinical trials will determine the dosing schedule in the near future.

It is important to remember that receiving the novel H1N1 flu vaccine will not protect you from regular seasonal influenza, and being vaccinated against the seasonal flu will not protect you from the novel H1N1 influenza. You can receive both vaccines on the same day if necessary.

Who Should be Vaccinated?

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that the following people be vaccinated against the novel influenza A (H1N1) once the vaccine becomes available:

- Pregnant women,
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age,
- Health care workers,
- Persons from ages 6 months to 24 years of age
- Adults from ages 25 through 64 years who are at higher risk for novel H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

Although it is not recommended for the elderly to receive the novel H1N1 vaccine, the CDC stresses that it is essential for those 65 years and older to receive the seasonal flu vaccine as soon as it is available.

For information about protecting yourself from influenza, go to www.cdc.gov

Who Should Receive the Seasonal Influenza Vaccine?

- Children 6 months-18 years of age
- Adults aged 50 years or older
- Chronic diseases (ex. hypertension, asthma)
- Residents of nursing homes/care facilities
- Health Care Workers
- Contacts & caregivers of those listed above
- Anyone who wishes to reduce their risk

Specialty Medicine Compounding Pharmacy to Begin Flu Vaccines in October

Specialty Medicine Compounding Pharmacy will begin our annual flu shot program beginning Friday, October 2nd. Flu shots will again be \$25. Those persons with Medicare or Blue Cross Medicare can receive flu shots at no cost by bringing their Medicare card for billing. Flu shots will be given every Monday, Wednesday and Friday until our vaccine supply is depleted.