

Carprofen

What is carprofen?

Carprofen (brand names: Rimadyl®, Zinecarp®, Canidryl®, Aventicarp®, Rycarfa®, Rimifin®, Carpox®, Tergive®, Carprodyl®, Carprieve®, Norocarp®, Novox®, quellin®, Rovera®, Vetprofen®, Levafen®) is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) used to treat pain and inflammation in a variety of animals.

In the United States, it is only FDA approved to treat dogs. Its use in cats, birds, reptiles, other small mammals, and large animals to treat pain and inflammation is '**off label**' or '**extra label**'. Many drugs are commonly prescribed for off label use in veterinary medicine. In these instances, follow your veterinarian's directions and cautions very carefully as their directions may be significantly different from those on the label.

How is carprofen given?

Carprofen is given by mouth in the form of a tablet. It may be given with or without food, but giving with food reduces the chances for stomach upset. If vomiting occurs when dosed on an empty stomach, give future doses with food or a treat.

This medication will take effect quickly, in about 1 to 2 hours, and improvement in clinical signs should follow.

What if I miss giving my pet the medication?

If you miss a dose, give it when you remember, but if it is close to the time for the next dose, skip the dose you missed and give it at the next scheduled time, and return to the regular dosing schedule. Never give your pet two doses at once or give extra doses.

Are there any potential side effects?

Side effects in dogs include gastrointestinal upset, such as mild vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, and temporary lack of appetite, as well as tiredness. More serious side effects include liver, kidney, or gastrointestinal damage characterized by severe vomiting, diarrhea, black or bloody stools, bloody vomit, increased drinking and/or urination, yellow skin or eyes, severe lethargy, and persistent lack of appetite. Other reported serious side effects include neurologic signs such as incoordination, paralysis, seizures, or disorientation, behavior signs such as restlessness, or aggression, skin effects such as itchiness, hair loss, or scabs/wounds, or allergic reactions such as facial swelling or hives. Your veterinarian may see blood abnormalities such as low red blood cell or platelet counts on bloodwork.

Carprofen may also affect lab tests, such as thyroid levels, liver enzymes, blood cell counts, potassium levels, kidney values, and bleeding times. In cats, serious kidney effects and gastrointestinal effects have occurred, and is therefore not usually recommended.

This moderate-acting medication should stop working in a few days, although effects can be longer in pets with liver or kidney disease.

Are there any risk factors for this medication?

Carprofen should not be used in pets with bleeding disorders such as Von Willebrand disease or those with low platelet counts, or in pets that are allergic to it or other NSAIDs in the same class. It should be used cautiously in pets younger than 6 weeks of age, older pets, pregnant or lactating pets, dehydrated pets, or pets with pre-existing diseases, especially liver, kidney, heart, or gastrointestinal disease. It should be used cautiously in pets that have had bone surgery or injury, as carprofen may affect bone healing. Carprofen should be used cautiously, if at all in cats, or in pets taking other NSAIDs or corticosteroids.

Are there any drug interactions I should be aware of?

The following medications should be used with caution when given with carprofen: anticoagulants, ACE inhibitors, aspirin or other NSAIDs, **corticosteroids**, cyclosporine or other nephrotoxic medications, dacarbazine, dactinomycin, desmopressin, digoxin, dinoprost, highly protein bound medications, insulin, oral antidiabetics, loop diuretics, methotrexate, or tricyclic antidepressants.

Be sure to tell your veterinarian about any medications (**including vitamins, supplements, or herbal therapies**) that your pet is taking.

Is there any monitoring that needs to be done with this medication?

Prior to starting carprofen, baseline bloodwork and urinalysis should be performed by your veterinarian. For long-term carprofen use, liver enzymes and kidney values should be checked 2 to 4 weeks after starting the medication, and then every 3 to 6 months during therapy. At home, monitor for serious side effects, and discontinue the medication and contact your veterinarian if these occur. Your veterinarian may monitor your pet to be sure that the medication is working.

How do I store carprofen?

Store at room temperature between 59°F and 86°F (15°C and 30°C). Store compounded forms of this medication according to the label.

What should I do in case of emergency?

If you suspect an overdose or an adverse reaction to the medication, call your veterinary office immediately. If they are not available, follow their directions in contacting an emergency facility.

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