

Meloxicam

What is meloxicam?

Meloxicam (brand names Metacam®, Loxicom®, OroCAM®, Rheumocam) is a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) used to relieve pain, inflammation, and fever in dogs and cats. It is indicated for the treatment of osteoarthritis in dogs and cats. Meloxicam is also used to treat pain associated with surgery.

How do I give my pet meloxicam?

Meloxicam is available as an oral liquid, oral spray (spray not available in Canada), injection, or chewable tablets for dogs, but only as an oral liquid or injection for cats. It is also available in pill form (brand name Mobic®, Mobicox®) for human use, which your veterinarian may prescribe 'off label' or 'extra-label' for large dogs.

Many drugs are commonly prescribed for off label use in veterinary medicine. In these cases, follow your veterinarian's directions and cautions very carefully.

Your veterinarian will administer the injectable version of the drug.

Before giving the oral liquid, shake the bottle well. Carefully measure the dose as directed by your veterinarian. Chewable tablets should be given as directed by your veterinarian.

Give meloxicam with food to reduce gastrointestinal side effects.

The oral spray is sprayed inside the cheek space. Your veterinarian will provide you with specific instructions for administering the medication.

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 giving your pet a dose, give the next dose as soon as you remember, but if it is closer than 12 hours before the next scheduled dose, either:

1. skip the dose you missed, give it at the next scheduled time, and continue with the regular dosing schedule, **OR**
2. give the missed dose and then wait the recommended interval before giving the next dose (continue giving it regularly at that **new time**).

Never give your pet two doses at once or give extra doses.

Are there any potential side effects?

Dogs: The most common side effect of meloxicam in dogs is gastrointestinal upset, including vomiting, soft stools, and lack of appetite.

Rarely, more serious adverse effects can occur. If there are changes in urination or yellowing of the skin (often noted on the inside of ear flaps), stop giving the medication and contact your veterinarian right away.

Cats: Meloxicam should be used with caution in cats. Cats with early undiagnosed kidney disease can suffer kidney damage with use of meloxicam, depending on the dose prescribed. Your veterinarian will carefully weigh the pros and cons of medicating your cat with meloxicam, and may order blood work and urinalysis to check your cat's kidney function before prescribing meloxicam. Gastrointestinal upset, including vomiting, diarrhea, and lack of appetite are side effects sometimes seen in cats.

Never give meloxicam prescribed for one pet in your household to another pet without first consulting your veterinarian.

Any side effects that you observe should be reported to your veterinarian.

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?

Meloxicam should not be used in patients with allergies to aspirin or other NSAIDs.

It should not be used in:

- pets with bloody stools or vomit
- pets that have pre-existing kidney or liver conditions
- pets that have loss of appetite
- pets that are taking other NSAIDs (e.g., carprofen, etodolac, firocoxib, and aspirin) or corticosteroids (e.g., prednisone and dexamethasone)
- pets that are dehydrated
- breeding, pregnant, lactating animals
- puppies younger than 6 months of age, or in kittens under 4 months of age

Meloxicam should be used with caution in:

- cats (see above)
- pets that have ulcers or have had them in the past
- pets that have pre-existing heart conditions
- pets that are old, weak, or frail
- pets that have a bleeding disorder

Are there any drug interactions I should be aware of?

Caution must be taken when meloxicam is used in conjunction with many different drugs including certain antibiotics (e.g., gentamicin, amikacin), anaesthetics, anticoagulants (e.g., heparin, warfarin), diuretics (e.g., furosemide), antifungals (e.g., fluconazole), and immunosuppressive drugs (e.g., methotrexate, cyclosporine). It is never a good idea to mix meloxicam with corticosteroids (such as prednisone, prednisolone) or other NSAID drugs.

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?

Annual blood testing before and after starting the use of meloxicam is recommended to monitor liver and kidney function primarily or to detect other signs consistent with gastrointestinal ulceration. It is common for your veterinarian to recommend or require annual blood tests to assess for effects on organ function.

How do I store meloxicam?

Store meloxicam at room temperature. Do not use after the expiration date stated on the bottle. Keep out of reach of children.

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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