

CLIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Updated: **December 2014**

Ranitidine

- **Keep this leaflet safe, as you may need to refer to it again.**
- **Please ask your vet or veterinary nurse if you have any further questions.**
- **This medicine has been prescribed for *your* pet ONLY. Do not take it yourself or give it to another person or any other animal; it may harm them even if their symptoms appear to be the same.**

The medicine you have been given for your dog or cat is called ranitidine. It may have a trade name such as Zantac®, but often will just be called ranitidine.

What is ranitidine?

Ranitidine belongs to a group of medicines called *H₂ receptor antagonists*. These drugs reduce gastric acid production in the stomach. In addition, ranitidine helps stimulate contractions of the stomach and intestinal wall (this is called a prokinetic effect).

Why has my pet been prescribed ranitidine?

Ranitidine is used to treat (or prevent) ulcers in the stomach and upper small intestine. These ulcers can develop in a variety of diseases such as disease of the intestines, kidney failure or cancer. They can also be a side effect of a group of pain-relieving drugs called NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) or of large doses of steroid drugs. The prokinetic effect of ranitidine can be beneficial in the presence of ulcers and in a condition called feline idiopathic megacolon, where cats have difficulty passing faeces due to a hugely enlarged and abnormal bowel.

How should I store ranitidine?

This medicine does not require special storage conditions. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

How do I give ranitidine tablets or syrup to my pet?

Try to disguise ranitidine in a small quantity of strongly flavoured food that your pet likes. Alternatively, it can be placed carefully on the back of the pet's tongue and their mouth held closed until the entire dose has been swallowed.

How long will my pet need to take ranitidine?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine.

This may vary between patients.

What should I do if I run out of tablets or syrup?

Try not to run out. Make sure you order more ranitidine from your vet if your supply is getting low. If you do run out, contact your vet for further advice and restart the course as soon as possible.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

If a dose is missed, give the medication as soon as possible. However, it is best to skip the missed dose if it is almost time for your pet's next scheduled dose. **DO NOT** give a double dose to make up for the missed dose and do not exceed the total stated dose in any one 24-hour period.

What should I do if my pet is accidentally given too many doses?

Contact your vet as soon as possible. There is limited information available about ranitidine overdose in pets. However, in people an overdose produces signs similar to the recognized side effects (see below) and is unlikely to be fatal.

Can my pet take ranitidine if I am already giving them other drugs?

Tell your vet if you are giving your pet any other medications, even if you think they already know. This includes herbal or off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop or pharmacy. Sometimes another drug called sucralfate is also used to help treat stomach or duodenal ulcers. Ranitidine should be given at least 30 minutes before sucralfate or antacids (medicines used to neutralize stomach acid). If your pet is taking digoxin (a drug used in heart conditions), itraconazole (an antifungal drug) or metoclopramide (used to treat vomiting), these should be given separately from ranitidine – 2 hours either before or after.

What are the possible side effects of ranitidine for my pet?

Side effects from ranitidine are rarely seen. However, it may cause hypotension (low blood pressure) or an abnormal heart beat that may make your pet generally weak and lethargic. If your pet shows any unusual symptoms whilst taking this medication, please contact your vet.

What should I do if my pet is unwell while taking ranitidine?

If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, you should not give any further doses and should contact your vet as soon as possible for advice.

What should I do if a person accidentally takes this drug?

If a person accidentally takes your pet's medicine, the person should be taken to the local hospital **immediately**. Take this leaflet and any remaining tablets or syrup plus their container (even if it is empty) with you.

Whom do I contact if I want to know more?

If you have any questions about this drug, or concerns about your pet's health, contact your own vet. They will know your pet's medical history and will know about ranitidine.

The Prescribing Cascade

This medicine is authorized for use in human patients and is used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. The medicine is not authorized by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), for use in dogs/cats/pets. Your vet can explain the 'prescribing cascade' in further detail to you and also explain why they are prescribing this drug for your pet. You will be asked to sign a consent form stating that you understand the reasons that the drug is being prescribed and its possible complications, before the treatment is issued.

© British Small Animal Veterinary Association 2014. While the editors and the BSAVA have made every effort in preparing this information leaflet, the contents and any statements are made in good faith purely for general guidance and cannot be regarded as substitute for professional advice. The publishers, contributors and the BSAVA do not take responsibility for the information provided on this leaflet and hence do not accept any liability for loss or expense incurred (by you or persons that you disseminate the materials to) as a result of relying on content in this leaflet. To this end, you are advised to consult your vet and seek their professional advice before taking any steps set out in this leaflet. If you are a vet, you must not rely on the contents in this leaflet without independently verifying the correctness and veracity of the contents. BSAVA is not responsible for any alterations made to this document from the version supplied.