

Don't Chase Your Tail With Pet Rxs

You're in a key spot to **keep your furry patients safe when dispensing human meds for pets.**

Ensure the animal's profile is set up according to your pharmacy's policy...to avoid wrong-patient errors. For example, you may need to add "K9" or "feline" to their name...or use a "species code."

Avoid dispensing pet Rxs under the owner's name and DOB. This can lead to confusion or possible fraud if billed to the owner's insurance.

Ensure pet profiles are updated with their current weight...since many pet meds are weight-based (cetirizine, famotidine, etc).

Watch for pet-prescribing nuances. For instance, liquid Rx strengths are more commonly written as "mg/mL"...versus "mg/5 mL."

Ask for specific species and breed...dosing and safety can vary.

For example, dogs can take prednisone, but it may not be effective in cats...since they can't convert prednisone to active prednisolone.

And loperamide is toxic to many herding breeds (collies, shepherds, etc) that can't break it down.

Don't rely on your computer interaction checker for pets...and reach out to the vet for questions. Some common problematic interactions in humans (clopidogrel/omeprazole, etc) aren't an issue in some animals.

Stay alert with switches between pet and human meds. For instance, human insulins have higher concentrations (100 units/mL, etc)...while pet insulins are lower (40 units/mL, etc).

Help check your state's prescription drug monitoring program when filling controlled Rxs for pets. And stay alert for signs of potential drug diversion...multiple vet prescribers, several pets getting controlled Rxs, owners prescribed the same Rx, lost meds, etc.

Refer patients to their vet if they ask about OTCs...since human NSAIDs, acetaminophen, and others can be fatal to cats or dogs.

If people ask about supplements, direct them to pet-specific products when possible. Human versions may contain toxic ingredients.

For example, xylitol is okay in cats...but can cause fatal low blood sugar and severe liver failure in dogs. And propylene glycol can cause fatal blood cell disorders in cats.

Pounce on our FAQ, Med Considerations for Cats and Dogs, for info on pet dosing, poison control strategies, and more.

Key References:

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- Budde JA, McCluskey D. A pharmacist's guide to filling veterinary prescriptions. 2021. https://cdn.brief.vet/plumbs/marketing-site/documents/PVD_Pharmacists_Guide_2021.pdf (Accessed October 26, 2024).

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