



Acton Animal Hospital  
Acton, MA  
978/263-7477

# Pet Care News

Spring 2009



## New Medication for Motion Sickness



Cerenia (a.k.a. Maropitant) is a newer medication that is used to prevent pets from vomiting due to motion sickness and anxiety associated with travel. This medication is said to have an effectiveness rate of 93%. Now owners do not have to leave their "poor traveling" pets behind with sitters or in a kennel – they can join the family in the car.

Cerenia is also used to treat acute nausea/vomiting in pets who present without an obstructive process causing this condition. This medication has been shown to greatly benefit patients undergoing chemotherapy (especially effective in patients using cisplatin 95%), as well as those with kidney disease, parvovirus infection, pancreatitis, etc. Patients with these conditions often suffer from acute vomiting, and if it is not stopped, it can lead to electrolyte imbalance, weakness, dehydration, and possibly death. Often this medication can stop the vomiting from these diseases, thus decreasing the chance of the need for expensive hospitalization and IV fluid therapy.

This medication can be used safely in dogs 16 weeks and older. If you ask your veterinarian about the use of this medication for your pet, make sure the vet is aware of any other conditions/medications/supplements that your pet is on before using this medication to avoid any contraindicated use. This medication should not be given if your pet is breeding, pregnant or lactating, and used with caution in dogs with liver problems. If you detect any side effects in your pet after use of this medication discontinue its use, and call your veterinarian.

## Avoidable Toxicities Affecting Our Pets



Spring is a good time to review substances in your home, garage, and yard that may be toxic to your pet and to make sure they are stored safely. The ingestion of various toxins from plants, food, and garbage can cause severe infections, organ failure, and even death in our pets. Symptoms include a rapid and severe onset of abdominal pain and distention, vomiting, bloody diarrhea, shivering, shock, and collapse.

Pain relievers and medications are another source of toxins. Pets may find the packaging intriguing and ingest the medication. The ingestion of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory can lead to anemia and gastrointestinal ulcers. Aspirin (at higher doses), Ibuprofen (a.k.a. Advil, Motrin, Nuprin, and Medipren) and naproxen (a.k.a. Anaprox, Naprelan, and Naprosyn) will cause painful gastrointestinal problems. **Acetaminophen should never be given to cats and dogs.** Pets who ingest Coumarin, either from owner's medication, or in D-Con, a rodenticide, will affect their blood clotting abilities, and may bleed to death.

In our garages or yards, pesticides, insecticides, pet dips and shampoos, weed killers, fertilizers, compost, antifreeze, oil/gasoline, and other noxious substances should be appropriately covered and placed in locked storage containers out of the reach of pets and younger family members. Most of these are neurotoxins that can lead to anxiousness, tremors, excessive salivation, urination, defecation, vomiting and diarrhea, excessive excitability or depression, and death.

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## Important Spring Tips!

- **Keep up with vaccines**

With warmer weather, more pets are now outside.

- **Ticks are back**

Remember to apply Frontline on cats and dogs, or Advantix (on dogs only).

- **Cars are heating up in the sun**

Leave your pet in his comfortable home instead of taking him along on errands.

Should you suspect a pet has ingested any suspicious substances or if they have any of the listed symptoms, please contact your veterinarian immediately. If you can bring a sample of the toxin and its packaging with you to the vet, it can provide invaluable assistance in the appropriate treatment and care for your pet. To find out more about potential sources of toxins in the home, please click on these links:

[http://www.pets.ca/articles/article\\_toxicfoodforpets.htm](http://www.pets.ca/articles/article_toxicfoodforpets.htm)

<http://www.pets.ca/articles/article-catplants.htm>

## Cushing's Disease (hyperadrenocorticism)

Cushing's is a disease of middle-aged or older dogs (and rarely cats). The common symptoms include excessive eating, drinking, and urination. As the disease progresses, the dog may develop a pendulous abdomen, poor haircoat, thin skin, muscle weakness, and lethargy.

Animals with Cushing's disease have excess glucocorticoid hormone produced by the adrenal gland. It can be caused by a tumor in either the pituitary gland in the brain or the adrenal gland in the abdomen. In PDH (pituitary dependent hyperadrenocorticism), the pituitary gland secretes an excess of stimulating hormone which causes the adrenal glands to over-produce glucocorticoid hormone. In AT (adrenal tumor) disease, the abnormal adrenal tissue produces excess glucocorticoid hormone. In some cases Cushing's symptoms are caused when glucocorticoid medications are administered.

Along with clinical signs, blood and urine tests, ultrasound and x-ray exams are used to diagnose this disease. Treatment, which must be closely monitored, usually involves medications that destroy the glucocorticoid secreting cells in the adrenal gland. In cases of AT an adrenalectomy to remove the diseased adrenal gland may be recommended.

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## Intestinal Parasites

As warmer weather arrives and our pets are spending more time outside, there is more chance for infection with intestinal parasites. Most dog and cat intestinal “worms” are contracted when the pet sniffs and licks while exploring its environment. Common parasites are round-, hook-, whip-, and tapeworms. Protozoal parasites such as coccidia, toxoplasma, and Giardia also affect dogs and cats.

Common symptoms of parasite infection are diarrhea, vomiting, weight loss, and poor haircoat. Some pets may not have any symptoms, while young puppies and kittens may become critically ill if badly infected.

All pets should have periodic fecal sample exams to detect parasite infections. In some cases, the parasites may be visible to owners, as when a roundworm is vomited or tapeworm segments are present on a pet's fur or bedding.

For dogs monthly heartworm preventatives also help eliminate some intestinal parasites. If your outdoor cat hunts small rodents, periodic deworming for tapeworms is advised. Today's parasiticides come in various forms (tablets, powders, liquids, and “spot-ons”). They are easy to administer and do not have unpleasant side effects.

Unfortunately, some of these common parasites are zoonotic (affect people as well as animals) so it is very important to keep pets and our shared environment parasite free.

**Reminders!** • Call ahead for prescription medications • Call ahead for prescription food orders