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Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)

What is a NSAID?

A non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug is a medication that is used to reduce pain and inflammation. Several types of NSAIDs are available for veterinary use which include: Rimadyl (carprofen), Previcox (previcoxib), Deramaxx (deracoxib) and Metacam (meloxicam). NSAIDs are prescription drugs for dogs which are available in various formulations. NSAIDs approved for use in dogs contain the following information on their labels: *All dogs should undergo a thorough history and physical examination before initiation of NSAID therapy. Appropriate laboratory tests to establish baseline blood values prior to, and periodically during, the use of any NSAID are strongly recommended.*

Why does my dog need a physical exam and blood work prior to beginning NSAID therapy?

It is important for your veterinarian to understand your pet's current organ function to decide if NSAIDs will be a good choice for your pet's pain control. NSAIDs are metabolized by your dog's liver and kidneys, by checking the blood enzymes produced by these organs, your veterinarian can assess your pet's risks of taking this type of medication. Be sure to tell your veterinarian your pet's current symptoms and current medications, including prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, herbal supplements and flea control products. Giving NSAIDs and other medications together could harm your pet.

What are the possible side effects my dog may experience while taking a NSAID drug?

NSAIDs are safe and generally tolerated medications, but, like other drugs, may cause some side effects. When administering an NSAID, you should watch side effects. The most common side effects include changes in appetite or vomiting. If you think your dog is experiencing a side effect as a result of taking an NSAID, please discontinue giving the medication and call your veterinarian. For a complete list of all possible side effects of NSAIDS please see the product insert, ask your veterinarian or visit one of the following websites: www.rimadyl.com, www.previcox.com, www.deramaxx.com, www.metacam.us.

To ensure that your pet is tolerating an NSAID well, your veterinarian will advise having blood work repeated 2-4 weeks after starting therapy. This blood work can be performed earlier if your dog is experiencing adverse side effects.

NSAIDs drugs prescribed for one pet in the household should NOT be shared with other pets. Some NSAIDs can be toxic to cats or other dogs with underlying medical conditions. Please contact your veterinarian before giving any medication to your pet.