

## CLIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Updated: **December 2014**

# Colchicine

- **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 is called colchicine.

### What is colchicine?

Colchicine is a drug that is extracted from the dried corns and seeds of *Colchicum autumnale*, the autumn crocus or meadow saffron. In human medicine it is used to help treat gout by reducing inflammation. Colchicine is also used in dogs to help reduce excess scar tissue formation that occurs as a consequence of specific diseases.

### Why has my pet been prescribed colchicine?

Colchicine is used in dogs to try and minimize permanent damage to organs caused by excess scar tissue formation. This may occur in certain diseases of the lungs and liver. Colchicine is also used in a kidney condition called renal amyloidosis to reduce the scar tissue formation around the kidney cells. It can also be used to help prevent narrowing of the oesophagus (gullet) due to formation of scar tissue during the healing process after oesophageal surgery or injury.

### How should I store colchicine?

Colchicine tablets should be protected from light and should therefore be stored in a light-proof (as well as child-proof) container. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

### How do I give colchicine tablets to my pet?

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

### How long will my pet need to take colchicine?

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?

Try not to run out. Make sure you order more tablets from your vet if your supply is getting low. If you do run out, contact your own 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 immediately** if your dog is given an overdose of colchicine as this can be fatal.

### Can my pet take colchicine 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. Do not give your pet colchicine if they are already taking ciclosporin (used to treat atopy, a common allergic skin condition). Check with your vet if you are also giving your pet non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), which are used to treat many conditions, most commonly arthritis.

### What are the possible side effects of colchicine for my pet?

Colchicine can cause vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain (which may cause your pet to look hunched and uncomfortable). Another less common side effect is kidney damage. Rarely, it is possible for colchicine to cause muscle weakness or damage to nerves. 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 colchicine?

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 tablets, the person should be taken to the local hospital **immediately**. Take this leaflet and any remaining tablets 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 colchicine.

### 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.

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