

CLIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Updated: March 2020

Sildenafil

- 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 sildenafil. It may have a trade name such as Viagra®, Nipatra®, Vizarsin® or Revatio®, but often will just be called sildenafil.

What is sildenafil?

Sildenafil is a *phosphodiesterase type V inhibitor*, which causes vasodilation in the blood vessels of the lungs. In dogs and cats it is used to treat pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH; high blood pressure in the vessels going from the heart to the lungs). In people (not pets) it is also used to treat erectile dysfunction.

Why has my pet been prescribed sildenafil?

Sildenafil is used to treat pulmonary arterial hypertension. This condition makes the right side of the heart work harder and can make your pet breathless and unable to exercise. Sildenafil causes the smooth muscle surrounding small blood vessels in the lungs to relax, decreasing the workload of the heart.

How should I store sildenafil?

This medicine should be stored at room temperature and away from excess heat and moisture. For safety, **all medicines should be kept out of the reach and sight of children.**

How do I give sildenafil 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 your pet's tongue and their mouth held closed until the entire dose has been swallowed. Ensure that plenty of fresh water is available.

How long will my pet need to take sildenafil?

Your vet will advise you on the length of time for which you will need to give this medicine. This may vary between patients. Do not stop giving sildenafil to your pet unless advised to do so by your vet.

What should I do if I run out of tablets?

Try not to run out. Make sure you order more sildenafil from your vet if your supply is getting low. Missing a dose may cause signs of your pet's disease to return. 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 pet receives an overdose of sildenafil as higher doses increase the risk of side effects.

Can my pet take sildenafil 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 know. This includes herbal and off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop or pharmacy. Sildenafil should not be used at the same time as any other drugs that decrease blood pressure, such as nitrates and alpha blockers. Sildenafil is also known to interact with a range of drugs, including cimetidine, erythromycin, itraconazole and phenobarbital (phenobarbitone).

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

Sildenafil may cause vomiting, dizziness, nasal congestion and breathing difficulties in people. If your pet starts vomiting, becomes unusually quiet, has

difficulty or noisy breathing, develops a nasal discharge or is ill in any way, you should **contact your vet immediately**. Side effects such as warmth or redness of the face, neck or chest have also been reported in people. It is unclear whether animals experience similar signs, but if your pet feels excessively warm to the touch, contact your vet. Prolonged erection may occur in dogs and cats but is exceptionally rare. In people, sildenafil can cause a transient increase in pressure inside the eyes; however, the significance of this has not yet been established. 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 sildenafil?

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 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 sildenafil.

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 2020. 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.