



# Why Should You Buy Your Pet's Medicine From Your Veterinarian?

By: Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association

With easy accessibility to the Internet and mail order companies these days, you may have thought about purchasing your pet's medicines from a supplier other than your veterinarian. There are several important risk factors you should consider before you decide to buy from another source.



- Your veterinarian knows your pet and your family (both 2-legged and 4-legged). He or she is familiar with your pet's specific health need and the environment where you live.
- Medications are usually dosed on a weight basis (milligram per pound or milligram per kilogram). It is important that your veterinarian determines your pet's weight and calculates the correct dosage to achieve the desired effect from the medication. Your pet's current health condition may also alter the final dosage.
- There are several medications that should not be administered until your veterinarian determines that it is safe for your pet to be given them. For example, heartworm preventatives should not be administered to dogs with active heartworm infections because it can lead to a fatal reaction. Therefore, it is important to consult your pet's veterinarian to determine what heartworm prevention program and timetable best suits your individual pet.

Your pet's health and well-being, as well as your satisfaction as an informed, valued pet owner is your veterinarian's primary goal.

Keep in mind also that medicine prescribed and purchased at your veterinarian's office comes with the comfort of knowing that you and your pet are individuals and have distinct needs that can best be served by your veterinarian.

- Dog and cat owners should keep in mind that their cats are not small dogs, nor are their dogs large cats. Many medications that are administered to dogs are not safe for cats (they can be fatal), and the reverse is also true.
- Many medications need to be reconstituted or diluted specifically for your pet. Some medications must be kept in a controlled environment or refrigerated. The medications that are shipped to your veterinarian are properly packaged and delivered under controlled temperatures so you don't have to worry about receiving "spoiled" medicines that were exposed to temperature extremes, sunlight, moisture, etc.
- Each animal is a different and unique individual. Some breeds and species have special needs or sensitivities that your veterinarian is aware of and he or she can select the product best suited to your pet.
- Some medications require follow-up monitoring for adverse reactions or dosage adjustments. If an adverse reaction does occur, it is important to have established a veterinarian-client-patient relationship to ensure that your pet receives appropriate medical attention on an emergency basis. An adjustment to the dosage may need to be made after lab tests and/or examinations are performed.

