

The Cutting Edge: New Drugs in Veterinary Medicine

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In the last year, several exciting new drugs for a host of problems have been launched in the veterinary market. This article will highlight the main features of six of them.

Proheart 6 — Heartworm preventative for dogs. While Proheart is not new to the veterinary market it has been absent for the last few years in the United States. It was released June 12, 2008. Proheart is an injectable heartworm medication that lasts for six months. One injection twice per year will replace monthly topicals and pills for heartworms. As with all heartworm preventatives, a negative heartworm test is required before administration. In addition, routine blood tests for red cell count, platelet numbers, and liver function are also required before administration. At this time, Proheart is only labeled for dogs between 6 months and 7 years of age. It cannot be given within 30 days of routine vaccinations and should be used in caution in animals with known allergies. The most common side effects include swelling, pain at the injection site, vomiting, and diarrhea. For more information see www.proheart6.com

Convenia — Long lasting antibiotic for dogs and cats. Convenia is an antibiotic injection that lasts for 7 days. It is best suited for skin infections. Traditionally, antibiotics need to be given 1-3 times daily (depending on the drug) for a minimum of seven days. Convenia is the first for dogs and cats that can be given just once. Side effects are minimal and include vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite, and lethargy. These are the same side effects one would expect for the oral antibiotic equivalent. Since it became available in early June 2008, I have used this medication most often for cats that are hard to pill. The biggest down side is the cost. The larger the animal, the more expensive it is. For more information see www.convenia.com

Promeris — Flea mediation for cats, flea/tick medication for dogs. Promeris contains a new, novel ingredient that kills fleas in dogs and cats. It is a topical product that is applied monthly. The active ingredient paralyzes the mouth parts of fleas and stops them from biting the affected animal. Promeris for dogs contains an additional ingredient that kills multiple species of ticks. It is important to NOT use the dog product on cats. Side effects are uncommon and can include lethargy and skin irritation. For more information see www.promeris.com

Comfortis — Oral flea mediation for dogs. Comfortis contains a new, novel ingredient that kills fleas on dogs for a month. It varies from the rest of the flea products on the market in that it is a long acting oral product. Previously, the only oral products killed adult fleas for 24 hours. Side effects include nausea, anorexia, lethargy, and salivation. For more information see www.fleas.com

Cerenia — Vomiting and car sickness medication for dogs and cats. Cerenia is an injectable or oral medication for vomiting. It can be used to treat vomiting due to a wide variety of causes or for car sickness. Since its launch in 2007, I have used this medication extensively and have been very excited by the results. It is excellent for dogs with parvo virus and for pets undergoing chemotherapy. The most common side effect is injection site irritation. It is labeled for a maximum of four days of use. It is also important to note that this medication may cover up signs of a more serious underlying condition and is not a replacement for diagnostic testing. For more information see www.cerenia.com

Slentrol — Weight loss medication for dogs. Slentrol was launched in 2007. It mainly works as an appetite suppressant but also blocks a small amount of fat absorption. Obesity in pets is just as serious of a problem as it is in people. Dogs that are overweight are at risk for cardiac problems, diabetes, joint problems, cancers, and a decreased life span. Slentrol can help overweight dogs return to an ideal weight. Routine bloodwork is needed to evaluate the liver before starting. It is also important to remember that diet and exercise are critical to the success of this medication. You must make a conscious effort to encourage weight loss in your pet for this medication to be most effective. For more information see www.slentrol.com

The information contained here is for educational purposes only and is not intended to take the place of your regular veterinarian. As always, if you have questions about the health of your pet, do not hesitate to contact a veterinarian.