

PAIN MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR DOGS



Here at Two Harbors Veterinary Clinic we offer several options for non-steroidal pain management. These options have varying costs and safety factors, but we provide all options to our clients and allow them to make the decision that best suits them and their pet.

Since its introduction on the market in the late 1990's, Rimadyl® (carprofen) has been the top-selling prescription anti-inflammatory drug for dogs. Many of our clients have used Rimadyl® for years without problems. However, a small number of dogs nationwide have experienced life-threatening and occasionally fatal liver and kidney reactions while on the drug. Generally speaking, the occurrence of these reactions was so small that the benefits of using the drug outweighed the risk. However, because of the seriousness of these reactions, it has been recommended that liver and kidney blood values be monitored regularly in all dogs on long-term Rimadyl use. This has increased the cost of using the drug, as well as made some veterinarians (specifically, those at our clinic) slightly uneasy about using it long-term. We recommend partial chemistry checks at induction, 2, and 4 weeks into therapy.

Metacam® was approved by the FDA in 2004, but has been in use for about 20 years in Europe. During that time, the number of liver and kidney reactions reported by European veterinarians has been significantly lower than those reported by American veterinarians using Rimadyl®.

Metacam costs more than Rimadyl® (see below), but in our opinion, appears to provide a better safety margin. It is for this reason that we have opted to stock it as our primary osteoarthritis drug. We feel very strongly that our patients should receive the safest and most effective treatments. While we have used Rimadyl® for years, our veterinarians feel much more comfortable dispensing Metacam®.

As always, our primary goal is to work with our clients to meet their needs. If you wish to continue using Rimadyl® we can order it to be dispensed by the bottle. With Rimadyl® we will continue to recommend screening your dog's liver and kidneys at time of initiation of therapy, then at 2 and 4 weeks into therapy, and then every four months to make sure reactions are not developing. Also, we stock a more cost-effective generic drug called Etodolac as another option. As with Rimadyl®, we do recommend screening the blood, as reactions can occur with Etodolac as well.

Please talk with one of our veterinarians to discuss which drug is best for your dog. We are very willing to work with you to help your pets age gracefully and comfortably.

Cost Ratios of Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs

Metacam®: _____ *Etodolac: _____

*Carprofen: _____

*For both Carprofen and Etodolac, we recommend a blood screen (~ \$35) at initiation, 2, and 4 weeks into therapy, then every four months.