Giving Gabapentin Before Your Cat's Veterinary Appointment

Information for cat owners

Your cat has been prescribed gabapentin to help them feel calmer and less stressed during their veterinary appointment.

What is gabapentin?

Gabapentin is a medication used to treat certain types of pain and seizures. In cats, it is also commonly used to **reduce anxiety and help them relax** during veterinary visits.

Although not specifically licensed for cats in the UK, it is widely used by vets and is generally safe when prescribed appropriately, including for older cats.

Why does my cat need it?

Gabapentin can help frightened or anxious cats feel calmer, making examinations and procedures, such as blood sampling, easier and less stressful.

Important: Every cat responds differently. Some become very sleepy, while others show little change. Gabapentin does not guarantee that we will be able to examine your cat or carry out procedures. Additional sedation may sometimes be needed.

When and how should I give it?

Give the prescribed dose approximately 2 hours before your appointment, unless advised otherwise.

Gabapentin comes in different forms:

- **Capsules:** Can be given directly by mouth or the powder mixed into a small amount of tasty food.
- **Tablets:** Can be hidden in a treat or pill putty, such as Easypill GiverCat.
- **Liquid:** Can be mixed with a small amount of food or a liquid treat, such as Lick-e-lix.

Top tips:

- Use only a **small amount of food** so you know your cat has eaten the full dose.
- If your cat refuses or spits out the medication, **do not give another dose without speaking to us first**.
- Follow any special feeding or fasting instructions we have given you.

If you are unsure how to give the medication, please contact us before your appointment.

What effects should I expect?

Every cat responds differently. Common effects include:

- **Sleepiness** – sometimes very deep sleep.
- **Wobbly walking** – appearing unsteady or 'drunk'.
- **Confusion** – seeming dazed or staring into space.
- **Reduced activity** – being quieter than usual.
- **Occasionally vomiting or drooling.**

A few cats may become restless or agitated instead of sleepy.

These effects are usually temporary.

If your cat is difficult to wake, collapses or has breathing difficulties, seek emergency veterinary advice immediately.

How should I care for my cat afterwards?

Some cats remain sleepy or unsteady for **8–24 hours**, especially older cats or those with certain health conditions.

Until your cat is back to normal:

- **Keep them indoors** and away from stairs or high furniture to prevent falls.
- Provide a quiet, comfortable place to rest.
- Keep food, water and a litter tray nearby.
- Offer food once they are alert enough to eat safely.
- Check on them regularly while allowing them to rest.

If your cat is still unusually sleepy after 24 hours, or you have any concerns, please contact us.

Please remember

Gabapentin helps reduce stress, but it does not guarantee that your cat will tolerate handling or procedures. If your cat remains too distressed, we may recommend additional sedation or an appointment at our clinic.

Your cat's comfort and welfare are always our priority.

Vet2Cat – The Clinic
Vet care for cats – at home or in our clinic.

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