



Ongoing Medications and Your Pet

My pet needs ongoing medications. Now what?

You've had a consultation with our vets, and they have recommended that your pet start one or more long term medications. Some medications have the potential to cause changes to blood or organs over time, so it is essential that your pet is closely monitored and seen regularly by our vets in order to pick up on any problems as they arise, before they become serious.

Our vets have identified a chronic condition that requires medical management to maintain the optimal health and wellbeing of your pet

Why does the vet need to keep seeing my pet?

As a profession, we are legally and ethically obligated to follow the requirements set out by the Veterinary Surgeon's Board of South Australia, including those covering the prescription and dispensing of medication.

In order to continue to dispense medications and maintain the legislated 'veterinary-client-patient relationship', it is a requirement that your pet have a consultation with our vets at least once in every six month period

Apart from fulfilling our legal obligations, these visits are essential in order to discuss your pet's condition, response to medication, dosage, side effects (if any), and ongoing health management plan moving forward. In most cases, our vet will examine your pet to ensure they are not suffering from any physical side effects, and that they remain healthy. However, in some cases, especially those involving behaviour medications, the visit may be limited to a discussion between the pet owner and our vet to determine that all is tracking smoothly. Rest assured that even if the vet does not physically examine your pet, they are observing them closely, and making an assessment on their health and wellbeing based on these observations as well as from their conversation with you.

Why do some medications require repeated blood testing?

Just as with people, some conditions require frequent medical assessment in order to ensure that the prescribed management plan is effective and not causing harm. In order to ensure this, we may recommend blood tests and repeated health checks. Some of these tests may be aimed at measuring the level of the medicine in the blood to be sure it is within a safe and therapeutic range. Other tests are designed to measure various blood and organ parameters to ensure there are no negative changes that we may need to address through dosage changes, medication changes, or more aggressive treatments or investigations.

For many conditions and medications, an initial blood test is recommended, either to diagnose the condition in the first instance, or to achieve a baseline for blood and organ parameters prior to use. The safe use of some medications may be ruled out by abnormal blood results, so it is important to be certain we are starting with a 'clean slate'.

Continued medical treatment without the necessary monitoring is unsafe, as it is very easy to over or underdose without regular medication dose checks

This may at worst, lead to a potentially fatal toxicity if overdosing, or at best, ineffective treatment if underdosing. Both situations could not only lead to the death of the pet but are also a waste of your money!

I know what my pet needs.

Why can't I just buy the medicine over the counter?

Whilst some medications may be available over the counter, just as with people, the vast majority of medications for chronic or serious conditions legally require a prescription. Veterinary practices are simply not allowed, by law, to supply medications without adhering to the regulatory obligations set out by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and enforced by the Veterinary Surgeon's Board of South Australia.

The same rules apply to all veterinary practices in South Australia

As it is a legal requirement to see your pet every six months, and to continue with any necessary blood testing or monitoring, this policy is not unique to The Vet Clinic.

What happens if I have run out of medication and I can't get my pet in to see the vet?

If your pet is on long term medications, it is important to ensure you always have a supply on hand to avoid any dosing interruptions. For some medications, a few missed doses may not have too much of an effect on your pet, but for others it could even be fatal.

When you have a few doses remaining, we strongly advise that you contact The Vet Clinic so we can put your pet's medication aside for you, or possibly order more from our suppliers. This is especially important for compounded medications, as the supplying pharmacy usually needs approximately a week to make the product and ship it out to us.

We understand that life does sometimes get in the way of good planning, despite the best intentions. If your pet is due for their six monthly consult, and you have run out of medication, we will do our best to help. Depending on the medication required, and the condition being treated, we may be able to dispense a few days supply in order to allow time for a consultation with our vets.

Pet owners must understand however that this will not be appropriate in all circumstances, and the responsibility for ensuring there is always an adequate supply of medications falls on the pet owner.

Why is there a fee for supplying a script?

The majority of veterinary practices charge some sort of fee for supplying a script. There are some obvious overheads such as ink, paper, and professional time. But there is also the expertise required to be familiar with the medications themselves including dosages, safety profile, drug interactions, and the size/concentration or

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formulation of available medications, as well as knowing which medication is suitable for the condition in question. Just like human doctors, veterinarians must maintain an annual registration and licence to practice, and with every signature we are risking that licence should the treatment not go to plan.

Medications, visits, and blood test timing

Medication	Example of Chronic Condition	Frequency of Visit with Vet	Frequency of Blood Tests	Reason for Blood Tests	Tests Required	Approx. Cost of Visit (inc consult)
Meloxicam	Arthritis Chronic pain	Minimum every 6 months	Initial testing, then every 6-12 months depending on patient	To assess & monitor kidney and liver function. Urine sample also helpful	Prep CBC UA	\$250 – 320 + meds/scripts
Cytopoint injection	Skin allergies Itchy skin	Minimum every 6 months	Usually every 12 months	To detect early immunosuppression	CBC	\$250 – 320 + meds/scripts
Apoquel tablets or chews	Skin allergies Itchy skin	Minimum every 6 months	Usually every 12 months	To detect early immunosuppression	CBC	\$250 – 320 + meds/scripts
Fluoxetine Trazodone Gabapentin Clomipramine	Anxiety & other behavioural disorders	Minimum every 6 months	Initial testing, then every 12 months	To assess & monitor liver and pancreatic function	Prep CBC	\$250 – 320 + meds/scripts
Pimobendan Benazepril eg Cardisure	Heart disease	Initially 1-2 monthly, then every 6 months once stable	Initial testing, then every 6-12 months depending on patient	To assess & monitor kidney function and electrolyte balance. Urine sample also recommended. Chest x-rays or ultrasound may also be discussed	Comp UA Rads US	\$350 – 400 + meds/scripts
Furosemide	Congestive Heart Failure	Initially 1-2 monthly, then every 6 months once stable	Initial testing, then after 1 month, then again 1 month following any dose change; & routinely every 6-12m	To assess & monitor kidney function and electrolyte balance. Urine sample also recommended. Chest x-rays or ultrasound may also be discussed	Comp UA Rads US	\$350 – 400 + meds/scripts
Beransa	Significant End Stage Chronic Pain	Minimum every 6 months	Initial testing, then every 6 months	To assess & monitor kidney, liver, blood cell levels & immune function	Prep CBC	\$250 – 320 + meds/scripts
Stilboestrol	Urinary Incontinence in dogs	Minimum every 6 months	Usually every 12 months	To detect early immunosuppression or anaemia Urine sample also recommended	CBC UA	\$300 – 370 + meds/scripts

Propalin	Urinary Incontinence in dogs	Minimum every 6 months	Initial testing, then every 12 months	To assess & monitor kidney function and electrolyte balance. Urine sample also recommended	Comp UA	\$350 – 400 + meds/scripts
Methimazole Carbimazole eg Vidalta	Hyperthyroidism in cats	Initially 1-2 monthly, then every 6 months once stable	Initial testing, then after 1 month, then again 1 month following any dose change; & routinely every 6 months	To assess & monitor liver & kidney function, red & white blood cells and electrolyte balance. AND To test and monitor the level of thyroid hormone in the blood	Comp T4	\$350 – 400 + meds/scripts
Phenobarbitone	Seizure Disorders	Initially 1-2 monthly, then every 6 months once stable	Initial testing, then after 1 month, then again 1 month following any dose change; & routinely every 6 months	To assess & monitor liver function and red & white blood cell numbers AND To test and monitor the level of phenobarbital in the blood	Prep CBC Pheno	\$250 – 300 + meds/scripts
Trilostane eg Vetoryl	Cushing's Disease in dogs	Initially 1-2 monthly, then every 6 months once stable	Initial testing, then after 2 weeks, then again 2 weeks following any dose change; & routinely every 3-6 months	Tests may include a hormone test (ACTH Stim Test), a steroid response test (Low Dose Dex Suppression Test), a urine cortisol test, and tests to assess & monitor liver & kidney function, red & white blood cell levels and electrolyte balance	Comp ACTH Stim LDDS Test UCCR UA	\$350 – 400 + meds/scripts \$500 - \$1000 for periodic specific hormone or steroid tests
Zycortal/Percorten	Addison's Disease in dogs	Initially 1-2 monthly, then every 6 months once stable	Initial testing, then after 2 weeks, then again 2 weeks following any dose change; & routinely every 3-6 months	Tests may include a hormone test (ACTH Stim Test), a steroid response test (Low Dose Dex Suppression Test), a urine cortisol test, and tests to assess & monitor liver & kidney function, red & white blood cell levels and electrolyte balance	Comp ACTH Stim LDDS Test UCCR UA	\$350 – 400 + meds/scripts \$500 - \$1000 for periodic specific hormone or steroid tests
Depo-medrol Other steroids	Multiple Conditions	Minimum every 6 months, depending on patient & condition	Initial testing, then every 6-12 months depending on patient & condition	To assess & monitor kidney, liver, blood cell levels & immune function	Prep CBC	\$350 – 400 + meds/scripts

Insulin	Diabetes	Initially 1-2 monthly, then every 6 months once stable	Initial testing, then after 2 weeks, then again 2 weeks following any dose change; & routinely every 3-6 months	To assess & monitor kidney & liver function, check for complications including infection or organ failure, and monitor blood glucose levels. Urine sample also required	Comp BG Curve Fructo UA	\$430 – 500 + meds/scripts \$300 – 400 for periodic blood glucose curves/measures
Denamarin +/- others	Chronic Liver Disease	Initially 1-2 monthly, then every 6 months once stable	Initially 1-2 monthly, then every 6 months	To assess & monitor liver function, blood cell levels & immune function	Comp	\$350 – 400 + meds/scripts
Various Medications for CKD	Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)	Minimum every 6 months	Initially after 3 months, then every 6 months	To assess & monitor liver function, blood cell levels & immune function	Comp	\$350 – 400 + meds/scripts

The exact frequency of visits and the frequency and specific type of blood tests chosen for your pet will be determined by our vets on an individual case basis, and so may differ from the recommendations listed above.

How can I get more information?

If you would like further information about your pet's ongoing medications and requirements, please feel free to contact the clinic anytime to have a chat with our friendly team. Simply contact The Vet Clinic on 8564 3488 and speak to one of our knowledgeable and friendly nurses.