

Prescription Veterinary Drugs

Questions: May I buy some xyz drug for my pet from you? We have been purchasing it at our regular veterinarian's office and we just ran out.

Veterinarians are commonly asked to provide medications for pets that are not established patients. There are many reasons, including the owner just moving to Waco or McLennan County, visiting the area, or just traveling through.

The answer depends first on the classification of the drug. There are two broad groups known as:

1. Prescription or legend drugs (R_x), and
2. OTC or over-the-counter drugs.

Most people can relate to their own experiences of going to their physician, and having a prescription filled by a pharmacist, vs. picking up a cold or pain medication off the shelves of a pharmacy or other store. The medication directly from the pharmacist generally would be a prescription drug while the other drug would be an OTC drug. The difference is the doctor's order or prescription.

Veterinarians are allowed to dispense prescription drugs directly to the client. Because the owner normally does not see a written or phoned in prescription to the pharmacy, they are not aware of the "doctor's order", however, for a legend drug, the veterinarian's prescription **must exist**. To confuse the issue further, some veterinary drugs can be prescription some of the time, and OTC at other times. Veterinarians carry both prescription and OTC drugs in their offices.

It is illegal for a veterinarian to sell a prescription medication to an established client or anyone else without the "doctor's order" or prescription and the complete fulfillment of all of the other requirements that must be met by the veterinarian and client to allow for the making of that order. By illegally selling medication to

anyone under any circumstances, the veterinarian risks civil fines, suspension, and possible loss of their veterinary license.

Recently the state boards of veterinary medical examiners have begun to interpret the pharmacy laws much more strictly on one veterinarian dispensing a prescription drug for another. In general that is no longer allowed.

While we don't always agree with the rules and regulations of laws, we must go by those requirements. So, regardless of how long your pet has used a medication or whether or not you only need a few days worth to get home, please understand the fact that we would like to help but can not unless we meet the complicated rules of being able to issue the "doctor's order". Only by establishing a proper doctor/client/patient relationship can we do that, and that requires your completing the correct paper work for our hospital records and allowing us to examine your pet.