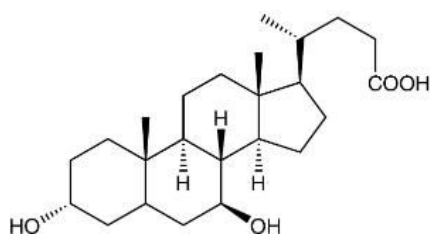


Ursodiol Use in Cats and Dogs

June 8th, 2020 Jieun Kang

What is Ursodiol?



Ursodiol (ur-soe-dye-ole) is a medication that you may recognize under two different names: Ursodeoxycholic acid or Actigall®.

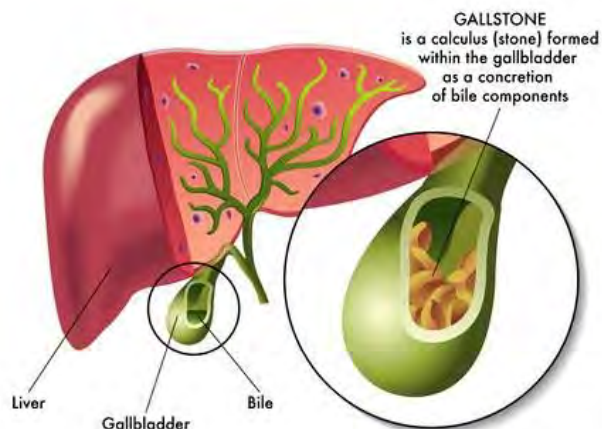
This medication is used to help remove or prevent gallstones containing cholesterol in not only humans but also in dogs or cats as well! This medication may also be used to treat liver or gallbladder disease in pets.

How does Ursodiol work?

The gallbladder, which is a small organ located underneath the liver, stores a substance called bile. Bile is secreted into the intestines in a response to food to aid in the digestion of fatty food. Problems in the liver or gallbladder may cause the accumulation of cholesterol within the gallbladder and saturate the bile found within the gallbladder. As a result, this may cause the formation of gallbladder stones or cholelithiasis.

As a bile acid, ursodiol will decrease the amount of cholesterol that is secreted by the liver and reabsorbed in the intestines. By decreasing the overall cholesterol, the amount of cholesterol in the bile or bile stones will be decreased as well.

Ursodiol has also been shown to increase the flow of bile in patients with chronic liver disease, which may protect the liver from toxic bile acids. It may also decrease the effects caused by the inflammation in patients with chronic hepatitis.



Is this medication safe?

The effects of this medication has been studied and shown to have efficacy in humans, cats and dogs. Ursodiol is relatively well-tolerated in cats and dogs; however should be avoided in rabbits or other hindgut fermenters.

Some adverse effects that your pet may experience is diarrhea, abdominal pain, or other gastrointestinal effects. Contact your veterinarian to discuss any potential drug interactions if your cat or dog is taking any other medications such as aluminum containing antacids, cholestyramine resins, taurine, or acetaminophen.

Where can I get Ursodiol for my pet?

Ursodiol is a prescription product that is only commercially made in strengths from 250-500 mg. However dosing of ursodiol is typically weight-based and may require a lower or higher strength than those found commercially.



Patient specific medications may be available in compounding specialty pharmacies. Compounding pharmacies are specialized pharmacies that prepare personalized medications for patients and pets and can meet patient-specific needs such as flavor, dosage form, or strength.

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