

# Desmopressin

DDAVP® and Stimate® are other names for this medication.

## How Is This Medication Useful?

- Desmopressin is a man-made (synthetic) form of the natural hormone vasopressin that controls fluid elimination in the body. This hormone is also called arginine vasopressin (AVP) and antidiuretic hormone (ADH).
- Desmopressin is used to control the excessive urination and thirst caused by a disease called diabetes insipidus.
- It is also sometimes used to treat a disease where blood does not clot called Von Willebrand's Disease.

## Are There Conditions or Times When Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?

- Desmopressin should not be used in patients who have heart disease or other conditions where they are prone to blood clots.
- Early in desmopressin treatment, your pet may retain too much water in its body. Your veterinarian may ask you to limit the amount of water that your pet drinks.
- Desmopressin should not be used in patients that are allergic to it or to drugs like it. If your pet shows any itching, swelling of the face, tongue or throat, gets hives, or has difficulty breathing, you should take it to the nearest veterinarian immediately.
- Desmopressin is not likely to harm unborn babies, but should probably only be used in pregnant animals if the life of the mother is in danger.
- If your animal has any of the above conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks of using the medication versus the benefits that it might have.

## What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?

- Desmopressin can cause eye irritation when administered as an eye drop.
- Desmopressin can cause water retention and swelling in the early part of therapy.
- Desmopressin does not have many side effects in animals, but humans have reported headaches, flushing (redness) of the skin, chills, weakness and dizziness when using desmopressin.
- Desmopressin is likely safe when given during pregnancy or nursing.

## How Should It Be Given?

- Desmopressin should be administered right into the eyelid sac (conjunctival sac) just like an eye drop. Do not touch the tip of the dropper to the eyelid, to avoid contamination.
- Desmopressin can also be given by injection.
- Desmopressin can be given by mouth, but much higher doses must be used, as much of it is destroyed in the digestive tract before it can be absorbed. It can be very expensive to give DDAVP by mouth.
- The successful outcome of your animal's treatment with this medication depends upon your commitment and ability to administer it exactly as the veterinarian has prescribed. Please do not skip doses or stop giving the medication. If you have difficulty giving doses consult your veterinarian or pharmacist, who can offer administration techniques or change the dosage form to a type of medication that may be more acceptable to you and your animal.
- If you miss a dose of this medication, you should give it as soon as you remember it, but if it is within a few hours of the regularly scheduled dose, wait and give it at the regular time. Do not double a dose, as this can be toxic to your pet.
- Some other drugs can interact with this medication, so tell your veterinarian about any drugs or foods that you currently give your animal. Do not give new foods or medications without first asking your veterinarian.
- Dogs and Cats: Dogs and cats usually receive desmopressin as an eye drop once or twice daily. Some animals may receive the drug orally, but it is usually much more expensive this way.

## What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

- Desmopressin should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container in the refrigerator, away from all children and other household pets.
- Open vials should be discarded after 30 days.
- If your pet starts urinating excessively again, you should contact your veterinarian.

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### References:

*Plumb Veterinary Drug Handout*