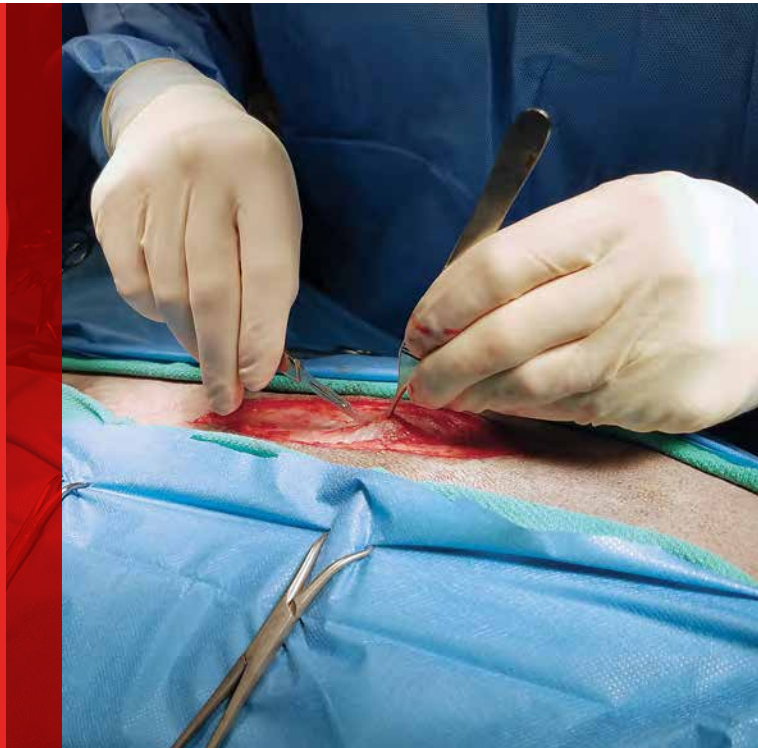


Splenectomy: Hilar Ligation Technique

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Don't miss J. Brad Case, DVM, MS, DACVS (Soft Tissue), at New York Vet, which provides RACE-approved CE curated by the medical team at *Clinician's Brief*. Learn more about Dr. Case's sessions and other clinical topics to be featured at the conference on pages 46-47 of this issue and at cliniciansbrief.com/nyvet

The spleen has a diverse set of functions, including hematopoiesis, RBC filtration and storage, and immune surveillance. Despite its many functions, removal of the spleen is commonly performed in dogs and cats with rarely observed long-term adverse sequelae. Splenectomy is indicated in cases of splenic neoplasia, trauma, torsion, and infiltrative disease and, occasionally, as treatment for immune-mediated disorders. It is also commonly performed on an emergency basis for hemoabdomen of splenic origin.

Spleen Anatomy

Clinicians should have an understanding of the splenic and regional vascular anatomy before performing splenectomy. The spleen is located on the left side of the body. The head of the spleen is the craniodorsal-most

portion and is attached to the greater curvature of the stomach via the gastrosplenic ligament, in which the short gastric arteries and veins are located. The tail of the spleen is the larger, caudal, more mobile portion that sweeps across the ventral midline, with a loose terminal attachment to the greater omentum.

The main blood supply to the spleen comes from the splenic branch of the celiac artery. This splenic artery runs along the left limb of the pancreas, giving off pancreatic branches before spreading into the vessels supplying the splenic parenchyma. It is important to avoid ligating the splenic vessels proximal to these pancreatic branches to avoid damaging pancreatic blood supply.

The head of the spleen is supplied by the short gastric arteries, which arise from the dorsal branch of the splenic artery and anastomose with the branches of the left gastric artery. The majority of the spleen is supplied by the ventral branch of the splenic artery and its numerous intermediate branches into the hilus. The ventral splenic artery continues as the left gastroepiploic artery

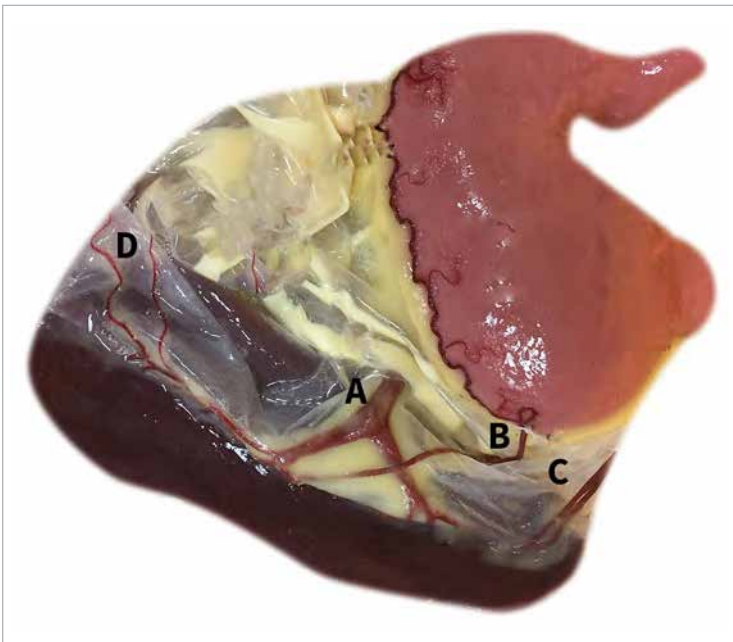
supplying the greater curvature and fundic portion of the stomach. Ideally, this continuation should be preserved; however, it was shown that sacrifice of the left gastroepiploic vessel did not compromise gastric blood flow or the integrity of the gastric wall in healthy dogs.¹ At the terminal portion of the tail of the spleen, the vessels continue as branches to the omentum.

Surgical Approach

The least complicated anatomic approach to splenectomy that ensures no inadvertent

ligation of the pancreatic or left gastroepiploic vessels is the hilar ligation technique. With this technique, the vessels are ligated as they terminate into the spleen. The speed of this technique varies depending on the manner of ligation used, with the use of a vessel-sealing device being the fastest, followed by a staple or clip device, and lastly suture ligation. Some devices can seal vessels up to 7 mm in diameter, whereas hemostatic clips are appropriate for vessels up to 3 mm in diameter. With the appropriate size and material, hand ligation with suture can be used in any size vessel for splenectomy. The following describes the hilar approach to splenectomy.

Read more about rapid 4-suture ligation technique at [cliniciansbrief.com/article/total-splenectomy](https://www.cliniciansbrief.com/article/total-splenectomy)



▲ **FIGURE** Splenic and regional vascular anatomy showing the splenic artery (A), gastroepiploic artery (B), short gastric arteries (C), and omental arteries (D)

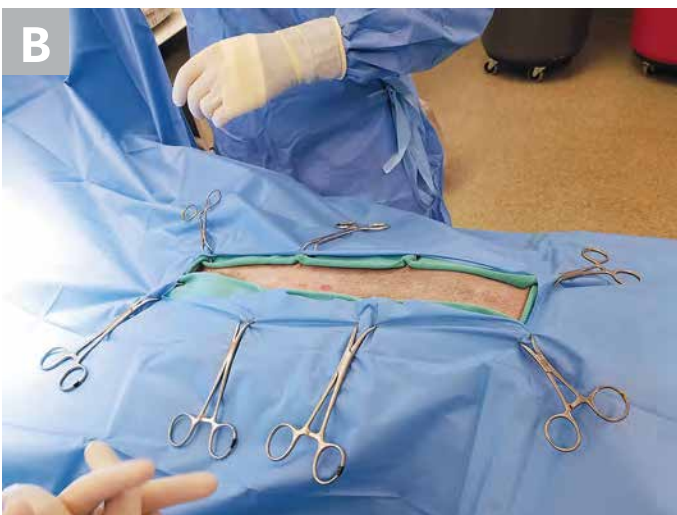
Of note, one study evaluating the relationship between gastric dilatation volvulus and previous splenectomy found dogs with a previous splenectomy to be 5.3 times more likely to develop gastric dilatation volvulus than were dogs without splenectomy.² Other studies have reported development of gastric dilatation volvulus in atypical breeds (eg, bichon frise, beagle) after splenectomy, which suggests splenectomy may be a potential predisposing factor.³ Thus, some surgeons may recommend prophylactic gastropexy be performed in dogs undergoing splenectomy.

With the appropriate size and material, hand ligation with suture can be used in any size vessel for splenectomy.

STEP-BY-STEP SPLENECTOMY: HILAR LIGATION TECHNIQUE

STEP 1

Position the patient in dorsal recumbency (A), and prepare the abdomen with a standard aseptic technique. Drape the patient from xiphoid to pubis (B). In male dogs, maintain the penis out of the sterile field.



WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- ▶ Standard general surgery pack including needle holders, thumb forceps, Metzenbaum scissors, suture scissors, and hemostatic forceps (8-12 inches)
- ▶ Balfour retractor
- ▶ Abdominal laparotomy sponges
- ▶ Suction device and Poole suction tip
- ▶ Electrosurgery handpiece (helpful, but not required)
- ▶ Suture for ligation (generally 2-0 to 3-0 size, depending on patient and pedicle size)
- ▶ +/- Hemostatic clip or stapler applicator (optional alternative or supplement to sutures)
- ▶ +/- Vessel sealing device (optional alternative or supplement to sutures)

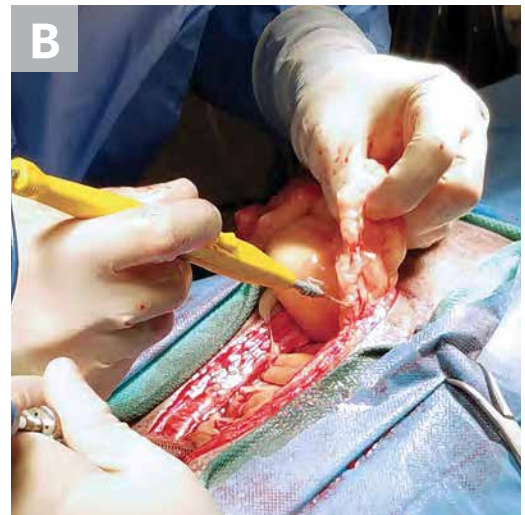
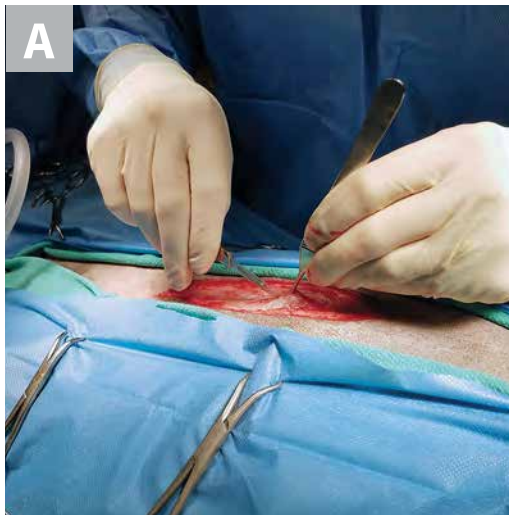
Some surgeons may recommend prophylactic gastropexy be performed in dogs undergoing splenectomy.

GASTROPEXY

Find a step-by-step guide to open and laparoscopic-assisted incisional gastropexy at [cliniciansbrief.com/article/open-laparoscopic-assisted-incisional-gastropexy](https://www.cliniciansbrief.com/article/open-laparoscopic-assisted-incisional-gastropexy)

STEP 2

Make a ventral midline abdominal incision from the xiphoid to 2 to 3 cm caudal to the umbilicus (**A**). The incision can be extended caudally if the size of the mass requires. Using electro-surgical instruments or ligation, remove the falciform fat en bloc to improve exposure (**B**). In rare cases, extension from midline into a paracostal incision may be indicated for removal of larger splenic masses.



STEP 3

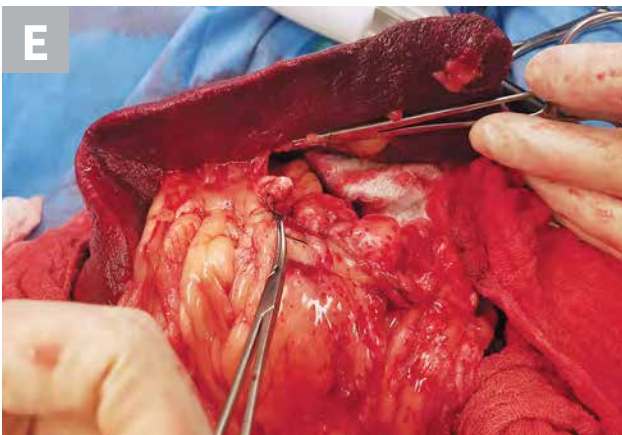
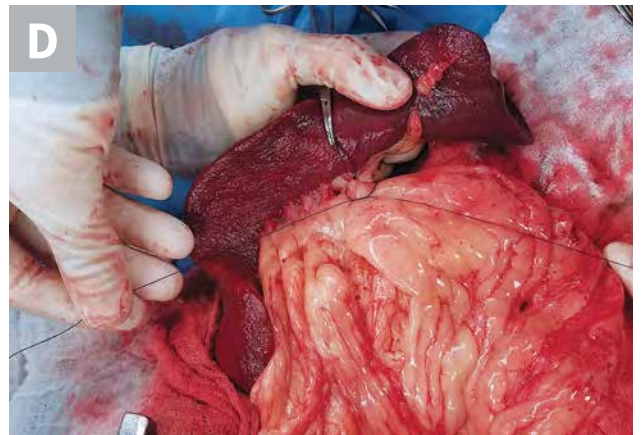
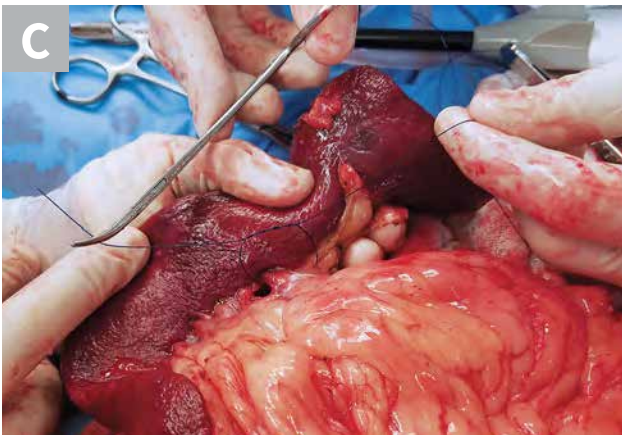
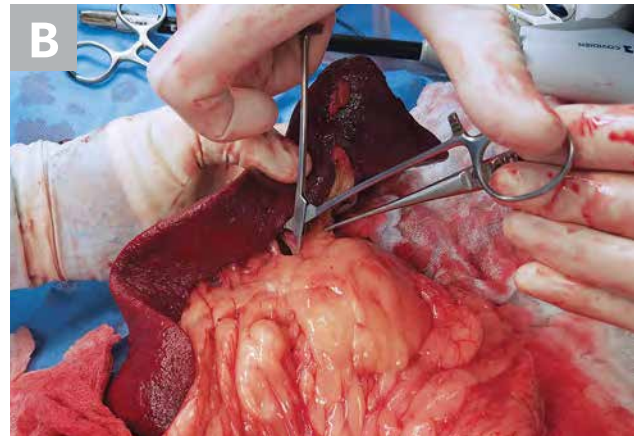
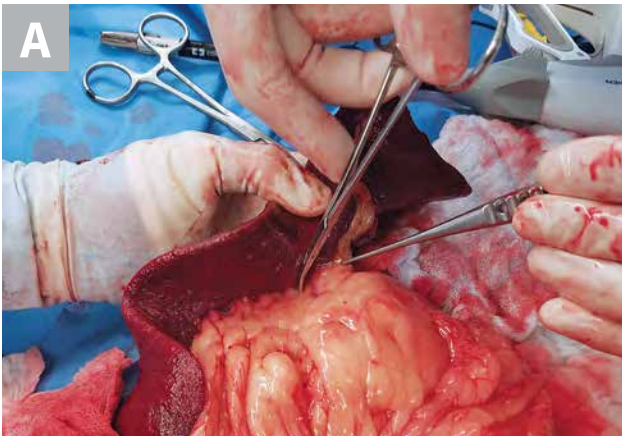
Perform a methodical exploration of the abdomen. If hemoabdomen is present, use suction to remove the hemorrhage and improve visualization. Carefully inspect the liver and the remaining abdominal viscera to monitor for presence of gross metastasis. A liver biopsy is indicated in cases of suspected malignancy regardless of gross appearance (see **Liver Biopsy**). Gently manipulate the spleen out of the body and onto moistened laparotomy sponges. A diseased spleen is often friable and should be carefully handled to prevent rupture. If the omentum is adhered to a splenic mass, divide the adhesions using electro-surgical devices or ligation. Digital dissection is not recommended, as rupture of the splenic mass may occur.

LIVER BIOPSY

Find step-by-step procedures for ultrasound-guided and open and laparoscopic liver biopsy at [cliniciansbrief.com/article/ultrasound-guided-biopsy-liver](https://www.cliniciansbrief.com/article/ultrasound-guided-biopsy-liver) and [cliniciansbrief.com/article/open-laparoscopic-liver-biopsy](https://www.cliniciansbrief.com/article/open-laparoscopic-liver-biopsy)

STEP 4

The hilar vessels can be visualized as they enter the splenic parenchyma (**A**). Using hemostatic forceps, bluntly isolate the vessels (**B**). Using 3-0 absorbable suture, circumferentially double ligate the hilar pedicles (**C** and **D**). Before transecting the vessel, place hemostatic forceps on the pedicle close to the spleen (**E**); this will help prevent splenic bleeding. Repeat this step for all vessels along the splenic hilus until the spleen is removed (**F**).



Author Insights

As an alternative to suture ligation, splenic hilar vessels can be ligated using a vessel-stapling apparatus or a vessel-sealing device.⁴

To speed up splenectomy, a surgical assistant can work on isolating the splenic hilar vessels using hemostatic forceps while the surgeon ligates and divides the isolated vessels.

One veterinary study demonstrated no difference in clinical outcome between splenectomy performed using a vessel-sealing device versus a stapler; however, the sealing device yielded significantly shorter procedure times.⁵

Another study found the bursting strength of the sealing device to be greater than 300 mm Hg (ie, ~3 times systolic pressure).⁶

STEP 5

After removing the spleen, biopsy any other grossly abnormal tissue. Check the splenic pedicles and biopsy sites for appropriate hemostasis, then gently lavage with warm sterile saline and evacuate the fluid. Perform routine abdominal closure.

Submit the spleen and tissue for histopathologic evaluation.

Postoperative Care & Monitoring

IV fluids should be continued postoperatively and matched to meet the patient's needs. Ongoing monitoring should include serial packed cell volume checks, continuous ECG for assessment of changes in heart rate and rhythm, twice-daily urine output assessment, body weight monitoring, and serial venous blood gas and lactate monitoring. IV opioid analgesics should be administered for at least 24 to 48 hours before weaning or switching to oral analgesic medications. Perioperative antibiotics should not be required for longer than 24 hours unless splenectomy was performed for splenic abscess, in which case antibiotics should be chosen based on results of culture and susceptibility testing and administered for 10 to 14 days. ■

See page 90 for references.

TRIFEXIS® (spinosad + milbemycin oxime) Chewable Tablets

Caution: Federal (USA) law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

Before using TRIFEXIS chewable tablets, please consult the product insert, a summary of which follows:

Indications:

TRIFEXIS is indicated for the prevention of heartworm disease (*Dirofilaria immitis*). TRIFEXIS kills fleas and is indicated for the prevention and treatment of flea infestations (*Ctenocephalides felis*), and the treatment and control of adult hookworm (*Ancylostoma caninum*), adult roundworm (*Toxocara canis* and *Toxascaris leonina*) and adult whipworm (*Trichuris vulpis*) infections in dogs and puppies 8 weeks of age or older and 5 pounds of body weight or greater.

Dosage and Administration:

TRIFEXIS is given orally, once a month at the minimum dosage of 13.5 mg/lb (30 mg/kg) spinosad and 0.2 mg/lb (0.5 mg/kg) milbemycin oxime body weight. For heartworm prevention, give once monthly for at least 3 months after exposure to mosquitoes (see **EFFECTIVENESS**).

Contraindications:

There are no known contraindications to the use of TRIFEXIS.

Warnings:

Not for human use. Keep this and all drugs out of the reach of children.

Serious adverse reactions have been reported following concomitant extra-label use of ivermectin with spinosad alone, a component of TRIFEXIS (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**).

Precautions:

Treatment with fewer than 3 monthly doses after the last exposure to mosquitoes may not provide complete heartworm prevention (see **EFFECTIVENESS**).

Prior to administration of TRIFEXIS, dogs should be tested for existing heartworm infection. At the discretion of the veterinarian, infected dogs should be treated with an adulticide to remove adult heartworms. TRIFEXIS is not effective against adult *D. immitis*. While the number of circulating microfilariae may decrease following treatment, TRIFEXIS is not indicated for microfilariae clearance.

Mild, transient hypersensitivity reactions manifested as labored respiration, vomiting, salivation and lethargy, have been noted in some dogs treated with milbemycin oxime carrying a high number of circulating microfilariae. These reactions are presumably caused by release of protein from dead or dying microfilariae.

Use with caution in breeding females. The safe use of TRIFEXIS in breeding males has not been evaluated.

Use with caution in dogs with pre-existing epilepsy (see **ADVERSE REACTIONS**).

Puppies less than 14 weeks of age may experience a higher rate of vomiting.

Adverse Reactions:

In a well-controlled US field study, which included a total of 352 dogs (176 treated with TRIFEXIS and 176 treated with an active control), no serious adverse reactions were attributed to administration of TRIFEXIS. All reactions were regarded as mild.

Over the 180-day study period, all observations of potential adverse reactions were recorded. Reactions that occurred at an incidence >1% (average monthly rate) within any of the 6 months of observation are presented in the following table. The most frequently reported adverse reaction in dogs in the TRIFEXIS group was vomiting.

Average Monthly Rate (%) of Dogs With Adverse Reactions

Adverse Reaction	TRIFEXIS Chewable Tablets ^a	Active Control Tablets ^a
Vomiting	6.13	3.08
Pruritus	4.00	4.91
Lethargy	2.63	1.54
Diarrhea	2.25	1.54
Dermatitis	1.47	1.45
Skin Reddening	1.37	1.26
Decreased appetite	1.27	1.35
Pinnal Reddening	1.18	0.87

^an=176 dogs

In the US field study, one dog administered TRIFEXIS experienced a single mild seizure 2 ½ hours after receiving the second monthly dose. The dog remained enroled and received four additional monthly doses after the event and completed the study without further incident.

Following concomitant extra-label use of ivermectin with spinosad alone, a component of TRIFEXIS, some dogs have experienced the following clinical signs: *trembling/twitching, salivation/drooling, seizures, ataxia, mydriasis, blindness and disorientation*. Spinosad alone has been shown to be safe when administered concurrently with heartworm preventatives at label directions.

In US and European field studies, no dogs experienced seizures when dosed with spinosad alone at the therapeutic dose range of 13.5-27.3 mg/lb (30-60 mg/kg), including 4 dogs with pre-existing epilepsy. Four epileptic dogs that received higher than the maximum recommended dose of 27.3 mg/lb (60 mg/kg) experienced at least one seizure within the week following the second dose of spinosad, but no seizures following the first and third doses. The cause of the seizures observed in the field studies could not be determined.

For technical assistance or to report suspected adverse drug events, contact Elanco Animal Health at 1-888-545-5973. For additional information about adverse drug experience reporting for animal drugs, contact FDA at 1-888-FDA-VETS or <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth>

Post Approval Experience (Mar 2012):

The following adverse reactions are based on post-approval adverse drug event reporting. The adverse reactions are listed in decreasing order of frequency: vomiting, depression/lethargy, pruritus, anorexia, diarrhea, trembling/shaking, ataxia, seizures, hypersalivation, and skin reddening.

Effectiveness:

Heartworm Prevention:

In a well-controlled laboratory study, TRIFEXIS was 100% effective against induced heartworm infections when administered for 3 consecutive monthly doses. Two consecutive monthly doses did not provide 100% effectiveness against heartworm infection. In another well-controlled laboratory study, a single dose of TRIFEXIS was 100% effective against induced heartworm infections.

In a well-controlled six-month US field study conducted with TRIFEXIS, no dogs were positive for heartworm infection as determined by heartworm antigen testing performed at the end of the study and again three months later.

Flea Treatment and Prevention:

In a well-controlled laboratory study, TRIFEXIS demonstrated 100% effectiveness on the first day following treatment and 100% effectiveness on Day 30.

In a well-controlled laboratory study, spinosad, a component of TRIFEXIS, began to kill fleas 30 minutes after administration and demonstrated 100% effectiveness within 4 hours. Spinosad, a component of TRIFEXIS, kills fleas before they can lay eggs. If a severe environmental infestation exists, fleas may persist for a period of time after dose administration due to the emergence of adult fleas from pupae already in the environment. In field studies conducted in households with existing flea infestations of varying severity, flea reductions of 98.0% to 99.8% were observed over the course of 3 monthly treatments with spinosad alone. Dogs with signs of flea allergy dermatitis showed improvement in erythema, papules, scaling, alopecia, dermatitis/pyodermitis and pruritus as a direct result of eliminating the fleas.

Treatment and Control of Intestinal Nematode Infections:

In well-controlled laboratory studies, TRIFEXIS was ≥ 90% effective in removing naturally and experimentally induced adult roundworm, whipworm and hookworm infections.

Palatability:

TRIFEXIS is a flavored chewable tablet. In a field study of client-owned dogs where 175 dogs were each offered TRIFEXIS once a month for 6 months, dogs voluntarily consumed 54% of the doses when offered plain as if a treat, and 33% of the doses when offered in or on food. The remaining 13% of doses were administered like other tablet medications.

NADA 141-321, Approved by the FDA

Manufactured for Elanco Animal Health,

A Division of Eli Lilly & Company

Indianapolis, IN 46285

www.trifexis.com

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Eli Lilly and Company, its subsidiaries or affiliates.

NexGard® (afoxolaner) Chewables

CAUTION: Federal (USA) law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

Description:

NexGard® (afoxolaner) is available in four sizes of beef-flavored, soft chewables for oral administration to dogs and puppies according to their weight. Each chewable is formulated to provide a minimum afoxolaner dosage of 1.14 mg/lb (2.5 mg/kg). Afoxolaner has the chemical composition 1-Naphthalenecarboxamide, 4-[5-[3-chloro-5-(trifluoromethyl)-phenyl]-4,5-dihydro-5-(trifluoromethyl)-3-isoxazolyl]-N-[2-oxo-2-(2,2,2-trifluoroethylamino)ethyl].

Indications:

NexGard kills adult fleas and is indicated for the treatment and prevention of flea infestations (*Ctenocephalides felis*), and the treatment and control of Black-legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*), American Dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*), Lone Star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*), and Brown dog tick (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*) infestations in dogs and puppies 8 weeks of age and older, weighing 4 pounds of body weight or greater, for one month.

Dosage and Administration:

NexGard is given orally once a month, at the minimum dosage of 1.14 mg/lb (2.5 mg/kg).

Dosing Schedule:

Body Weight	Afoxolaner Per Chewable (mg)	Chewables Administered
4.0 to 10.0 lbs.	11.3	One
10.1 to 24.0 lbs.	28.3	One
24.1 to 60.0 lbs.	68	One
60.1 to 121.0 lbs.	136	One
Over 121.0 lbs.	Administer the appropriate combination of chewables	

NexGard can be administered with or without food. Care should be taken that the dog consumes the complete dose, and treated animals should be observed for a few minutes to ensure that part of the dose is not lost or refused. If it is suspected that any of the dose has been lost or if vomiting occurs within two hours of administration, redose with another full dose. If a dose is missed, administer NexGard and resume a monthly dosing schedule.

Flea Treatment and Prevention:

Treatment with NexGard may begin at any time of the year. In areas where fleas are common year-round, monthly treatment with NexGard should continue the entire year without interruption.

To minimize the likelihood of flea reinfestation, it is important to treat all animals within a household with an approved flea control product.

Tick Treatment and Control:

Treatment with NexGard may begin at any time of the year (see **Effectiveness**).

Contraindications:

There are no known contraindications for the use of NexGard.

Warnings:

Not for use in humans. Keep this and all drugs out of the reach of children. In case of accidental ingestion, contact a physician immediately.

Precautions:

The safe use of NexGard in breeding, pregnant or lactating dogs has not been evaluated. Use with caution in dogs with a history of seizures (see **Adverse Reactions**).

Adverse Reactions:

In a well-controlled US field study, which included a total of 333 households and 615 treated dogs (415 administered afoxolaner, 200 administered active control), no serious adverse reactions were observed with NexGard.

Over the 90-day study period, all observations of potential adverse reactions were recorded. The most frequent reactions reported at an incidence of > 1% within any of the three months of observations are presented in the following table. The most frequently reported adverse reaction was vomiting. The occurrence of vomiting was generally self-limiting and of short duration and tended to decrease with subsequent doses in both groups. Five treated dogs experienced anorexia during the study, and two of those dogs experienced anorexia with the first dose but not subsequent doses.

Table 1: Dogs With Adverse Reactions.

	Treatment Group			
	Afoxolaner		Oral active control	
	N ¹	% (n=415)	N ²	% (n=200)
Vomiting (with and without blood)	17	4.1	25	12.5
Dry/Flaky Skin	13	3.1	2	1.0
Diarrhea (with and without blood)	13	3.1	7	3.5
Lethargy	7	1.7	4	2.0
Anorexia	5	1.2	9	4.5

¹Number of dogs in the afoxolaner treatment group with the identified abnormality.

²Number of dogs in the control group with the identified abnormality.

In the US field study, one dog with a history of seizures experienced a seizure on the same day after receiving the first dose and on the same day after receiving the second dose of NexGard. This dog experienced a third seizure one week after receiving the third dose. The dog remained enrolled and completed the study. Another dog with a history of seizures had a seizure 13 days after the third dose of NexGard. The dog remained enrolled and completed the study. A third dog with a history of seizures received NexGard and experienced no seizures throughout the study.

To report suspected adverse events, for technical assistance or to obtain a copy of the MSDS, contact Merial at 1-888-637-4251 or www.merial.com/NexGard. For additional information about adverse drug experience reporting for animal drugs, contact FDA at 1-888-FDA-VETS or online at <http://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/SafetyHealth>.

Mode of Action:

Afoxolaner is a member of the isoxazoline family, shown to bind at a binding site to inhibit insect and acarine ligand-gated chloride channels, in particular those gated by the neurotransmitter gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), thereby blocking pre- and post-synaptic transfer of chloride ions across cell membranes. Prolonged afoxolaner-induced hyperexcitation results in uncontrolled activity of the central nervous system and death of insects and acarines. The selective toxicity of afoxolaner between insects and acarines and mammals may be inferred by the differential sensitivity of the insects and acarines' GABA receptors versus mammalian GABA receptors.

Effectiveness:

In a well-controlled laboratory study, NexGard began to kill fleas four hours after initial administration and demonstrated >99% effectiveness at eight hours. In a separate well-controlled laboratory study, NexGard demonstrated 100% effectiveness against adult fleas 24 hours post-infestation for 35 days, and was ≥ 93% effective at 12 hours post-infestation through Day 21, and on Day 35. On Day 28, NexGard was 81.1% effective 12 hours post-infestation. Dogs in both the treated and control groups that were infested with fleas on Day -1 generated flea eggs at 12- and 24-hours post-treatment (0-11 eggs and 1-17 eggs in the NexGard treated dogs, and 4-90 eggs and 0-118 eggs in the control dogs, at 12- and 24-hours, respectively). At subsequent evaluations post-infestation, fleas from dogs in the treated group were essentially unable to produce any eggs (0-1 eggs) while fleas from dogs in the control group continued to produce eggs (1-141 eggs).

In a 90-day US field study conducted in households with existing flea infestations of varying severity, the effectiveness of NexGard against fleas on the Day 30, 60 and 90 visits compared with baseline was 98.0%, 99.7%, and 99.9%, respectively. Collectively, the data from the three studies (two laboratory and one field) demonstrate that NexGard kills fleas before they can lay eggs, thus preventing subsequent flea infestations after the start of treatment of existing flea infestations.

In well-controlled laboratory studies, NexGard demonstrated >97% effectiveness against *Dermacentor variabilis*, >94% effectiveness against *Ixodes scapularis*, and >93% effectiveness against *Rhipicephalus sanguineus*. 48 hours post-infestation for 30 days. At 72 hours post-infestation, NexGard demonstrated >97% effectiveness against *Amblyomma americanum* for 30 days.

Animal Safety:

In a margin of safety study, NexGard was administered orally to 8 to 9-week-old Beagle puppies at 1, 3, and 5 times the maximum exposure dose (6.3 mg/kg) for three treatments every 28 days, followed by three treatments every 14 days, for a total of six treatments. Dogs in the control group were sham-dosed. There were no clinically-relevant effects related to treatment on physical examination, body weight, food consumption, clinical pathology (hematology, clinical chemistry, or coagulation tests), gross pathology, histopathology or organ weights. Vomiting occurred throughout the study, with a similar incidence in the treated and control groups, including one dog in the 5x group that vomited four hours after treatment.

In a well-controlled field study, NexGard was used concomitantly with other medications, such as vaccines, anthelmintics, antibiotics (including topicals), steroids, NSAIDs, anesthetics, and antihistamines. No adverse reactions were observed from the concomitant use of NexGard with other medications.

Storage Information:

Store at or below 30°C (86°F) with excursions permitted up to 40°C (104°F).

How Supplied:

NexGard is available in four sizes of beef-flavored soft chewables: 11.3, 28.3, 68 or 136 mg afoxolaner. Each chewable size is available in color-coded packages of 1, 3 or 6 beef-flavored chewables.

NADA 141-406, Approved by FDA

Marketed by: Frontline Vet Labs™, a Division of Merial, Inc.
Duluth, GA 30096-4640 USA

Made in Brazil.

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