

5 Ways to Enhance the Veterinarian–Pharmacist Relationship

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Prescription drugs for veterinary patients often need to be compounded (ie, customized to fit a patient's specific needs). Many veterinarians may wonder how to choose a quality pharmacist. Following are 5 simple but often overlooked ways for veterinarians to enhance their relationship with their veterinary pharmacist.

1 “Vet” the prospective pharmacist. Has he or she completed courses specific to veterinary compounding? Beyond knowledge of anatomy and physiology, is he or she knowledgeable about the latest legal and regulatory issues?

2 Interview the pharmacist about his or her compounding quality processes. Take a tour of the compounding laboratory, and ask to see results of potency tests for preparations (and sterility tests, if possible). Can the pharmacist provide a certificate of analysis for each of the ingredients used and explain how that informa-

tion is applied when preparing compounds? Does the pharmacy use compounding and dispensing software that tracks formulas and initiates recalls if necessary? From where does the pharmacy obtain its materials—the cheapest supplier or the one with the highest-quality processes?

3 Partner with a local compounding pharmacy that focuses on quality. Benefits of this relationship can include:

- The pharmacy can often provide containers, delivery systems, and devices to enhance patient care.
- The veterinarian can be confident about quality. It is a bold risk to expect that the most inexpensive product will be of top quality.

4 Acknowledge the pharmacist's expertise and use him or her as a resource. The pharmacist is not a diagnostician and relies on the clinician's knowledge and training to complete the circle of care. The pharmacist may know about specific pharmaceutical, pharmacokinetic, or regulatory issues that can affect decisions for the

patient, whereas the veterinarian has clinical knowledge and access to information not available to pharmacists. A team approach is best.

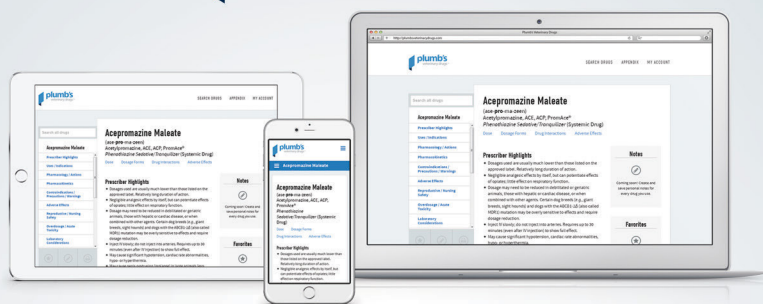
5 Many compounding pharmacists have patient follow-up programs to assess therapy. **By partnering with a reputable compounder, veterinarians can have a better pulse on patient progress, compliance, and therapeutic success or failure.** This helps enhance customer service and patient care.

Conclusion

The working relationship between a veterinarian and a veterinary compounding pharmacist is a key part of practice. Veterinarians can enhance their relationship with the veterinary pharmacist by attending educational events together, gaining valuable perspective of day-to-day operations by spending time at the pharmacy and inviting the pharmacist to visit the clinic,

and providing the pharmacist with a list of common prescriptions to keep on hand. Because they are accessible to the general public, pharmacists are often the point of referral for patients looking for healthcare practitioners. Veterinarians should make sure the pharmacist knows their practice, their specialties and board certifications, and their commitment to quality patient care. ■

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