

Frequently Asked Questions

Metropolitan Veterinary Hospital Cardiology Department



What do I do if I gave an extra dose of medication?

- ***Furosemide*** (Lasix, Salix)
 - Give ½ dose at next dosing interval, then resume normal administration
- ***Pimobendan*** (Vetmedin)
 - Give ½ dose at next dosing interval, then resume normal administration
- ***ACE inhibitor*** (enalapril/benazepril/lisinopril)
 - Skip next dose, then resume normal dosing schedule
- ***Spironolactone***
 - If receiving once daily, give next dose as scheduled.
 - If on twice daily dosing, skip next dose.
- ***Sotalol***
 - If your animal has a structurally normal heart or mild heart disease, give ½ dose at next dosing interval, then resume normal administration.
 - If your pet has dilated cardiomyopathy with heart enlargement, Skip next dose, then resume normal dosing schedule.
 - Monitor for weakness, lethargy, cough, or change in breathing and if this occurs pet should be brought in on emergency.
 - If uncertain, call.
- ***Mexiletine***
 - If on three times daily dosing, give next dose due at 12 hours post pill, then 12 hours later resume normal dosing schedule thereafter.
 - If on twice daily dosing, resume normal dosing at next interval
- ***Amiodarone***
 - If on once daily dosing, continue normal dosing schedule.
 - If on twice daily dosing, skip next dose then resume normal dosing.
- ***Digoxin***
 - Give ½ dose at next dosing interval, then resume normal administration.
 - If patient is on ¼ tablet and cannot halve dose, skip the next dose, and then resume normal dosing schedule.
- ***Diltiazem***
 - If on three times daily dosing, skip next dose then resume normal dosing schedule.
 - If on twice daily dosing, reduce next dose by half, if possible, then resume normal dosing schedule. Do not skip next dose.
- ***Sildenafil*** (Viagra)
 - If on three times daily dosing, skip next dose then resume normal dosing schedule.
 - If on twice daily dosing, give next dose as scheduled.
- ***Clopidogrel*** (Plavix)
 - Give next dose as scheduled.
- ***Apixaban*** (Eliquis)
 - Skip next dose then resume normal dosing schedule.
- ***Enoxaparin*** (Lovenox)
 - If on twice daily dosing schedule, skip next dose. ○ If on once daily dosing schedule, give next dose as scheduled.



What do I do if I forgot a dose?

In general, if less than half the dosing period has passed (i.e., <6 hours for twice daily dosing or <4 hours for every 8-hour dosing), give missed dose and return to normal dosing schedule immediately, skip the subsequent dose, then resume normal dosing schedule.

- For medications administered once daily in which >12 hours have elapsed since last dose, give missed dose immediately, skip the subsequent dose, then resume normal dosing schedule
 - ❖ Example – spironolactone given once daily at 8am. You realize at 11pm that morning dose was missed. Give dose at 11pm, skip next 8am dose, and resume normal dosing the following day.
- For medications administered two to three times daily in which more than half the dosing period has passed, give the medication as soon as you realize that it was missed, skip the next dose, and give the following dose two hours early, then return to normal dosing.
 - ❖ Example – sotalol given 8am and 8pm. Owner realizes that dose was missed at 4pm. Give that dose then, skip the 8pm dose, give next dose 6am, then return to 8pm and 8am dosing thereafter.

EXCEPTIONS:

- **Furosemide** – As long as your pet does not have elevations in their kidney values, give missed dose as soon as possible and continue normal dosing schedule uninterrupted. If kidney values are elevated, follow recommendations above.
- **Vetmedin/pimobendan** – Give missed dose as soon as possible and continue normal dosing schedule

What do I do if my pet vomited once after being administered an oral dose?

- If within 30 minutes of dose administration or if pill(s) noted in vomitus, wait 30 minutes after vomiting episode and re-dose.
- If greater than 30 minutes after administration, continue normal dosing schedule.

EXCEPTIONS:

- ✚ Take these actions and call cardiology the next business day for further recommendations:
- **Digoxin** – If your pet was started on digoxin within the preceding 10 days, hold medication for 24 hours, then resume at lower dose (usually there is instruction regarding this in your go-homes).
- **Mexiletine** – If your pet was started on mexiletine within last 10 days, skip the next dose and decrease dosing interval (i.e., drop to twice daily dosing from three times daily).
- **Amiodarone** – If your pet was started on amiodarone within the last 10 days, skip the next dose and if receiving twice daily, decrease to once daily administration.
- **ACE Inhibitor** – Withhold this medication until your pet is eating and drinking well.

I am having difficulty giving my pet their medication. Are there any tips for administration?

- Hiding the medication in a treat or pill pocket
- Coating medication with low sodium peanut butter, cream cheese, or unsalted butter
- Manually pilling (cat) - refer to YouTube for demonstrations
- Using a pill gun
- Crushing the medication (**except diltiazem XR**) and mixing with small amount of soft food or in water to administer with a syringe.



What do I do if my pet has a decreased appetite/stopped eating or is vomiting?

- If medications have been changed within the last 1-2 weeks and your pet has not been rechecked:
 - o Furosemide, ACE Inhibitor, spironolactone
 - If your pet was not having any symptoms at the time of change, hold the new medication and call at next business day.
 - If the change was made due to active/symptomatic heart failure or collapse, your pet should be seen through ER.
 - o Digoxin, mexiletine, amiodarone – see above (vomiting after medication administration)
- If there have been no recent medication changes – hold the ACE Inhibitor (enalapril/benazepril/lisinopril), digoxin, and spironolactone until vomiting stops and your pet is eating well. Other medications should not be stopped without evaluation. If you are unable to medicate your pet due to ongoing symptoms (i.e., vomiting, inappetence) they will need to be seen through ER.

What if my pet has diarrhea?

- If your pet has been started on Vetmedin, an ACE Inhibitor (enalapril/benazepril/lisinopril), and/or spironolactone within the last 10 days for asymptomatic disease, hold medications and call at next business day.
- OK to offer your pet a probiotic
- You can consider holding food for 12 hours (never hold water) and then begin a bland diet.

My pet is having inappropriate urinations/increased urinations:

- If there are signs of a urinary tract infection - straining to urinate, blood in urine, frequent small urinations –your pet should be seen.
- If there has been a recent increase in diuretic dose, please understand that an increase in urination can be an expected side effect from a diuretic and means that it is doing its job. If your pet is having accidents at night, you can give the evening dose several hours before bedtime even if dose interval is shortened as long as there is at least 6 hours between oral doses. Please call cardiology at next business day for recommendations on adjusting diuretic dose.

My pet has an increased resting respiratory rate and/or effort without struggling to breathe.

What should I do?

- Your pet can be seen through ER at your discretion.
- If your pet has previously been on furosemide, increase furosemide by the equivalent of one daily dose (e.g., a patient on 6.25mg twice daily can get a third 6.25mg dose daily) and call at next business day for further instructions.
- If you have been given furosemide to start in the event of symptoms, follow instructions on bottle or last go home. As long as symptoms respond, call cardiology at next business day for further instructions.
- If symptoms do not respond to increase in furosemide dose or starting furosemide, your pet should be seen through ER.



My pet is coughing. What should I do?

- ALWAYS monitor your pet's resting respiratory rate.
- If your pet's resting respiratory rate is elevated, or they are having any change in respiratory effort, is restless, or is having other concurrent symptoms, then you may consider one of the following:
 1. Your pet can be seen through ER at your discretion.
 2. If your pet has previously been on furosemide, you can increase the furosemide by the equivalent of one daily dose (e.g., a patient on 6.25mg twice daily can get a third 6.25mg dose daily) and call at next business day for further instructions.
 - ❖ If symptoms do not respond to an increase in furosemide dose, your pet should be presented on ER.
 3. If you were given furosemide to start in the event of symptoms, follow instructions on bottle or last go home. As long as symptoms respond, call at next business day for further instructions.
 - ❖ If symptoms do not respond after starting furosemide, your pet should be presented to emergency.
 4. If your pet is otherwise acting normally and has normal resting respiratory rate, you can continue to monitor resting respiratory rates closely until the next business day and then call the cardiology service. If resting respiratory rate starts to change, call MetroER.

My pet collapsed/fainted/passed out. What do I do?

- If this is the first time your pet has fainted:
 - An ER visit is recommended.
- If your pet has a history of fainting with their B2 valve disease or pulmonary hypertension:
 - **Fainting with NO other symptoms** (make sure to count resting respiratory rate and this is less than 30 breath per minute) and has completely recovered from the episode, you can restrict activity, monitor for any other symptoms, and call the cardiology department at next business day.
 - **Fainting with other symptoms** (increase in cough, change in breathing, elevated respiratory rate, repeated collapse, lack of full recovery within 10-20 minutes post episode) your pet should be presented to emergency.
 - **If your pet has a history of an arrhythmia:**
 - If your pet has recovered quickly from the episode and seems returned to normal, call MetroER and the ER veterinarian can contact the cardiologist on-call for recommendations on adjusting antiarrhythmic medications.
 - If your pet has not fully recovered from the episode (still lethargic, weak, etc.), they should be presented to emergency.

For additional questions, please contact our office:

Akron/Copley:

Monday-Friday 8:00am-4:30pm

(330) 670-2376 – Cardiology Service Direct Line

(330) 666-2976 – 24/7 Metro Emergency Service

Cleveland East:

Monday-Thursday 8:00am-4:30pm

(216) 201-9844 – Cardiology Service Direct Line

(440) 673-3483 – 24/7 Metro Emergency Service

What if I have questions after the cardiology service has closed for the day?

You are welcome to leave a voicemail and a member of the cardiology team will get back to you by the end of the following business day. **If your pet is experiencing an emergency, please contact Metropolitan Veterinary Hospital Emergency Service or take your pet to the closest emergency clinic.**