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FAQ Prescription Questions

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Every day we prescribe medications to treat our patients. Every day we answer questions and requests concerning medications from our clients. We love your questions but we have come to realize that there are a few common questions that are asked routinely. These routine questions sparked this article.

Are all medications we dispense to clients prescription items?

No they are not. A prescription medication or drug is defined as a pharmaceutical drug that legally requires a medical prescription to be dispensed. In contrast, over-the-counter drugs (OTC) can be obtained without a prescription. Just like human medicine there are two kinds, prescription and OTC, we use and recommend both. Many medications are prescription only because prescription drugs are only effective for specific problems, and may actually be harmful to your horse if used without that critical veterinary examination and diagnosis. Having these drugs available as prescription-only medications ensures that they are used appropriately.

Can I get a prescription for a medication?

This question has two answers. Yes, every time we prescribe a prescription drug or medication your horse then has a prescription for that specific medication with specific instructions to be give for a specific amount of time to treat a specific problem.

No, we cannot prescribe a medication for a horse or a problem that we have not seen because "Veterinary prescription drugs are those drugs restricted by federal law to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian." In order for a veterinarian to order a medication there must be a valid Veterinarian/Client/Patient Relationship (VCPR). A valid VCPR means that all of the following are required:

1. The veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making clinical judgments regarding the health of the patient and the client has agreed to follow the veterinarians' instructions.
2. The veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of the patient to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the patient. This means that the veterinarian is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the patient by virtue

of a timely examination of the patient by the veterinarian or medically appropriate and timely visits by the veterinarian to the operation where the patient is managed.

3. The veterinarian is readily available for follow-up evaluation or has arranged for the following: veterinary emergency coverage, and continuing care and treatment.
4. The veterinarian provides oversight of treatment, compliance, and outcome.
5. Patient records are maintained.

Failure to comply with these regulations is a felony. The Nebraska statute states: "Any person who knowingly and intentionally engages in distribution of veterinary legend drugs in this state in violation of the Veterinary Drug Distribution Licensing Act is guilty of a Class III felony." A veterinarian who does not comply with these regulations is subject to fines, penalties, and license revocation.

Can I pick up a medication from you that my other veterinarian prescribed?

No, we are not a pharmacy. We can only dispense what we prescribe with a valid Veterinarian/Client/Patient Relationship.

What is a compounded medication?

In general, compounding is a practice in which a licensed pharmacist, a licensed physician, or, in the case of an outsourcing facility, a person under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist, combines, mixes, or alters ingredients of a drug to create a medication tailored to the needs of an individual patient. Any time we mix two medications together, like chlorhexidine and alcohol for navel dip or SSD cream and a steroid for scratches, we are compounding a drug specifically to treat your horse. It is only legal to compound a medication if there is not a commercially FDA approved drug available. Using a trusted, reputable compounding pharmacy is extremely important because as your veterinarian we are liable for unsafe compounded medications not the pharmacy.

What is a generic medication?

A generic medication is a drug product that is comparable to a brand name drug product in dosage form, strength, route of administration, quality and performance characteristics, and intended use. Generally generic medications cost less than name brand because that company did not have to spend money on research and development, they are able to use the brand name company's product information and research to make and sell the medication. There is a lot of discussion as to whether a generic medication is as effective as a brand name medication. According to FDA regulations a generic's maximum concentration of active ingredient must not fall more than 20% below or 25% above that of the brand name. This means it does not have to be exactly the same strength as the name brand drug to be considered the same by the FDA. We use brand name and generic medications that we believe are effective in treating our patients.

Can you call in a prescription or mail my prescription to me?

There are way too many factors that play into mailing medications; we do not like to mail them. The most economical and easiest way to have medications delivered to your door or barn is to use our online store. We have partnered with a local veterinary pharmacy to provide you with an online shopping and home delivery service. Vets First Choice is located here in Omaha. They work directly with us and with drug manufacturers to buy in volume, giving you better prices than what we can offer in-clinic. They follow the same shipping and storage guidelines that we do in order to guarantee you get a safe and effective product. Most other online and catalog do not guarantee the efficacy of products they sold you and cannot guarantee they were stored properly or safely. You can access our store at <http://nebraskaequine.vetsfirstchoice.com/>.

These common questions didn't have short answers but it is important that you understand the why's and how's of prescription medications. As always if you have questions just call us.