






**VETERINARY
SPECIALTY HOSPITAL**

Pharmacy FAQs

 760-466-0600

 760-466-0660

 vshsd.com

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Answers to your veterinary prescription questions

Can I fill my pet's prescription at my local pharmacy?

If the medication is a human-labeled drug, it can be filled at your local pharmacy. Some medications approved only for use in animals (veterinary-labeled) and medications that require reformulation (compounding) into a specialized form may or may not be available from your local pharmacy. Your veterinarian will be able to help you understand your options for filling your pet's prescriptions.

If you prefer to use an outside pharmacy rather than having your prescription filled at the hospital, please request a written prescription from your veterinarian. For prescriptions that have been filled at VSH initially, please verify that this medication is available at your local pharmacy before requesting that refills be transferred. If your pet's prescription has refills, the pharmacy you select should call the VSH pharmacy directly at 760-466-0600 to request a transfer of the prescription. When requesting that your pet's medications be filled at your local pharmacy, please have your pharmacy's name and phone number when calling in your request. We recommend that you work directly with your local pharmacy to obtain up-to-date pricing information when necessary.

Can I get a refund on prescriptions my pet did not take?

Veterinary Specialty Hospital will not accept medications for return under any circumstances.

California State Health Code forbids the resale of any prescription medication that has been dispensed from the hospital. Federal law also stipulates that any medications that leave the pharmacy may not be returned for reuse due to potential safety concerns that include tampering, incorrect storage, and contamination. In addition, VSH must dispose of medications that are unfit for use by means of secure, environmentally-sound disposal methods that are of significant cost to the hospital. The disposal of large volumes of returned drugs will increase hospital costs overall.

How can I avoid running out of medications for my pet?

Call the pharmacy at 760-466-0600 and press option three (3) to request a refill, or use our easy online prescription refill form available on our website. When no refills are authorized, your veterinarian must be contacted to authorize additional refills. The pharmacy staff will do this for you, but it may take additional time to complete your refill request. Do not wait until you are out of medication. Always check your supply before weekends, holidays, and vacations. Mail and shipping service to and from the hospital is slower on and around holidays, especially in December. Please plan ahead for these times.

Can prescriptions be mailed?

We offer mail service for your pet's prescriptions for a small fee. To assure appropriate storage conditions and safe delivery, medications that require refrigeration must be shipped using Fed-Ex, next-day delivery. Fees are subject to change without notice. Please check with the pharmacy staff when requesting that medication be mailed or shipped to you. Medications mailed or shipped to you must be paid for in full before shipping. We accept credit card payment over the phone.

Do you mail prescriptions out of state?

If you have moved out of state, it is best to find a local veterinarian and work with them to obtain the medication your pet needs. We cannot legally mail your prescriptions out of state. If you are planning a trip, for most medications, you may request a larger supply from us or your veterinarian prior to your trip.

Who do I contact if I believe there has been an error with my pet's medication?

If your pet's medication appears different or has changed in any way, it is always best to double check that the prescription has been filled correctly. Typically, the difference is due to a change in the manufacturer and your prescription bottle will indicate the change with a label stating, "This is the correct medication that has been prescribed, although the size and shape may appear different".

We work hard to assure that the medication errors do not occur; however, errors occasionally may happen. It is very important that you notify us immediately if you ever discover that we have made an error. We keep track of every reported error and use these reports to assure that we have instituted every corrective action possible to prevent an error in the future. If you suspect a problem or wish to verify your prescription with us, please call the client services staff at 760-466-0600 and ask to speak with a pharmacy staff member to confirm that you have the correct medication.

If a veterinarian who is not employed by VSH prescribes a drug for my pet, can I have it filled at VSH?

No. We are not able to fill prescriptions written by anyone other than veterinarians employed at VSH. Your pet must have had an exam or visit with our VSH veterinarians within the previous 12 months and the prescription must have been written by that veterinarian. State and federal law mandates our policy on this matter. Prescriptions can only be filled by the VSH pharmacy if they have been written by veterinarians currently employed by VSH and must be filled for patients currently being treated by one of our doctors.

What if I need refills and the veterinarian that saw my pet no longer works at VSH?

If the veterinarian that has physically seen your animal is no longer employed by VSH, it is up to the discretion of the new veterinarian to either approve refills or ask to see the pet before continuing refills. By California state law, the veterinarian must have had a visit with you and your pet within the previous 12 months to prescribe medications for your pet.

What do I do if the medication that my pet takes is no longer available?

Medications can always be subject to availability problems due to changes in the prescription drug market, manufacturer availability, and many other economic or regulatory issues. The pharmacy staff will work closely with our VSH veterinarians to help find an alternative medication or treatment to fit your pet's treatment needs.

Can I use drugs after the expiration date?

Manufacturers assign expiration dates to drugs based on documented safety and stability studies of the drug in a particular dosage form. After the expiration date, it can be difficult to determine if the drug is active and safe. Some drugs, such as tetracyclines, can degrade into potentially harmful substances beyond the assigned expiration date. We never recommend that drugs be used past the expiration date on the original container or medication label. Some drugs expire more quickly than others.

Are over-the-counter medications from pharmacies safe to give my pet?

Many over-the-counter (OTC) medications can be dangerous for your pet. Do not give over-the-counter medications or supplements to your pets without advice from your veterinarian.

What should I do if my pet ingests my medication or more than the recommended dose of his/her own medication?

It is very important that you quickly contact a veterinarian. There are many medications designed for safe use in humans that can be very toxic to animals (pain medications, anti-inflammatory medications, birth control pills). Our emergency department is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and can answer questions about medications your pet has taken. Call us at 760-466-0600.

How do I get rid of old medications?

The Office of National Drug Control Policy in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Environment Protection Agency has issued consumer guidelines for the proper disposal of unused, unneeded, or expired prescription drugs. The consortium recommends that drugs be removed from their original packaging and mixed with an undesired substance, such as use coffee grounds or kitty litter, and placing them in impermeable, non-descript containers, such as empty cans or sealable bags, prior to disposal. We urge you to take advantage of community pharmaceutical take-back programs. San Diego and surrounding counties offer these programs. Information can be found at CalRecycle: Medication Waste Disposal, or refer to this flyer for the California Board of Pharmacy recommended disposal methods.

What are the pharmacy hours?

The pharmacy is open from Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Any prescriptions that have been filled can be picked up 24 hours a day, seven days a week. All prescription refill requests and messages received after pharmacy department hours will be addressed the next business day that the pharmacy department is open. Please allow three business days for refill processing.

If you have any additional questions regarding prescriptions please send us an email or call us at 760-466-0600.