

FOR ALL THE REASONS
YOU LOVE YOUR DOG,
THERE'S PEXION®



UNDERSTANDING CANINE EPILEPSY

Most owners are unaware that dogs can have epilepsy until they experience their dog having a seizure (or 'fit'). This leaflet will help you understand what epilepsy is, what happens during an epileptic seizure, and what you can do to help your dog.

What is epilepsy?

The word epilepsy simply means 'repeated seizures'. A seizure occurs when there is a burst of excessive electrical activity in the brain.

How can you tell if your dog is having a seizure?

Seizures can affect dogs in different ways. They can be as mild as lip twitching on one side of the face, or as severe as a dog falling to the floor and thrashing around.

It is important to note that although your dog's eyes may remain open during a more severe seizure, they are unconscious and are not aware of what is happening. A seizure can be distressing to watch, but remember that your dog is not in any pain.

Canine epilepsy is common.
It can affect up to 5 in every 100 dogs¹



UNDERSTANDING YOUR DOG'S EPILEPSY

Epilepsy can be broadly categorised into two types: **primary** (or idiopathic) and **secondary** (or symptomatic).

Most dogs that are diagnosed with epilepsy have primary epilepsy, where no underlying cause for the seizures is found. These dogs will be healthy and completely normal in all other respects.

Unfortunately, there is no single test that can determine if your dog has primary epilepsy. Instead, your vet will make a diagnosis by listening to your description of what happens during your dog's seizures, examining your dog thoroughly and performing a series of other tests to rule out secondary epilepsy (where there will be an underlying cause). It is normal for dogs with primary epilepsy to have normal test results. In some cases, your vet might suggest that your dog sees a specialist to have a brain scan (or MRI).

Primary epilepsy can affect any dog, but is more common in young (1-5 years), purebred dogs,¹ such as:



UNDERSTANDING SEIZURES

Although no two dogs are the same, seizures often have three phases. During these phases you may notice some, or all of the following changes in your dog.

PHASE ONE: Before a seizure

- ▶ Unsettled movements: pacing or licking of the lips
- ▶ Excessive bodily functions: salivating or urinating
- ▶ Heightened anxiety levels: whining, barking or hiding

PHASE TWO: During a seizure

- ▶ Muscle stiffening: Your dog may fall to the floor on one side, with their head back
- ▶ Leg movements: stretched out with rigid, jerking or paddling movements
- ▶ Breathing: can become faster and heavier
- ▶ Vocalisation (e.g. barking and whining)
- ▶ Excessive bodily functions: passing urine or faeces

PHASE THREE: After a seizure

- ▶ Immediately afterwards: dogs may lie motionless on the floor for a while before attempting to stand
- ▶ In the following minutes to days: disorientation and staggered walking; temporary loss of sight; excessive hunger and thirst; uncontrolled bowel and/or bladder activity

Every dog and every seizure is different – so you might not be able to distinguish all three phases, every time, in your dog.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT TO DO DURING A SEIZURE

What can you do to help your dog?

When you notice that your dog is about to have, or is actually having a seizure, the first thing to do is stay calm. Below are some other important things you can do to help.



Make sure your dog is not in a position to injure itself

- ▶ If possible, remove any nearby objects that they could bump into, or get tangled in (such as coffee tables or electric cords)
- ▶ Try not to hold your dog's head or move their tongue out of their mouth. They won't swallow their tongue, but they could bite you as their movements are involuntary



Remove as many 'sensory stimuli' as possible

Darken and quieten their surroundings by:

- ▶ Turning the television off
- ▶ Dimming the lights
- ▶ Closing the curtains
- ▶ Reducing the noise level in the room
- ▶ Removing any other animals or young children from the room (where possible)



Try to time the length of the seizure

Generally a seizure will only last for a couple of minutes, although it may feel much longer. If your dog's seizure lasts more than five minutes, or they have more than one seizure in a 24 hour period, you should contact your vet immediately.



Keep a seizure diary

Help your vet to identify any patterns in your dog's epilepsy and recommend the most appropriate treatment options by keeping an accurate record of your dog's seizures.

EPILEPSY MANAGEMENT FOR A FULL AND HAPPY LIFE

How is epilepsy managed?

Epilepsy is a life-long condition. It cannot be 'cured', but it can be managed so that dogs and their owners can continue to lead a full and happy life together.

As each dog is different, and the severity and types of epilepsy vary, your vet will be able to advise you about how best to manage your dog's condition and will always tailor treatment to suit the individual needs of your dog.

You can also read the tips below or refer to the back of this leaflet for resources to help you monitor your dog's progress.

Help manage your dog's epilepsy by:

- ▶ Monitoring the number of seizures your dog has
- ▶ Keeping a diary of your dog's progress
- ▶ Telling your vet immediately if there are any changes in your dog
- ▶ Asking your vet for any additional information or help



EPILEPSY CHECKLIST

It is important to remember that epilepsy is a condition that cannot be cured, but it can be managed so that dogs and their owners can lead a full and happy life together. Knowing what to do can help you to best manage your dog's condition:

- ▶ Make regular check-up appointments to see your vet
- ▶ Talk about your dog's epilepsy with friends and family so that they know what to do if they experience your dog having a seizure

If you think your dog is going to have a seizure

- ▶ Try and make sure that your dog is not in a position to injure themselves
- ▶ Remove as many 'sensory stimuli' as possible, such as turning off the television and dimming the lights

During a seizure

- ▶ Stay calm
- ▶ Record your dog's seizures in their seizure diary. If possible, film your dog's first seizure(s) and show the film to your vet
- ▶ Keep your hand away from your dog's mouth while it is having a seizure. It is not in control of its actions and may accidentally bite you

Contact your vet immediately if your dog has

- ▶ A seizure that continues for more than 5 minutes
- ▶ More than one seizure in a 24 hour period

During recovery

- ▶ Keep an eye on your dog, particularly if there are other pets or children around
- ▶ If possible, allow your dog to recover quietly at home after a seizure, rather than moving them

ABOUT PEXION®²

What is Pexion® and how does it work?

Pexion® is a treatment for dogs with primary epilepsy. It acts on a specific receptor in the brain cells to reduce the amount of excessive electrical activity present. In this way, like all epilepsy treatments, Pexion® acts to reduce the number of seizures that your dog has and their impact on your dog's life.

How is Pexion® given?

Pexion® is available as a white tablet. It should be given to your dog by mouth, twice a day. Your vet will advise you on how much Pexion® to give to your dog. It is important that you always give the prescribed dose and follow the advice given by your vet. It is also likely that your vet may need to adjust your dog's dose, and will therefore need to see your dog regularly.

It is important that you follow the advice your vet gives you on how to give your dog Pexion®, and at what dose.

How long does Pexion® take to work?

Pexion® starts to work within a few hours. However, it may take a little while before you notice an improvement in your dog's seizure pattern because:

- ▶ The majority of dogs with primary epilepsy only experience a seizure every few weeks
- ▶ Your vet may take some time to find the right dose of Pexion® for your dog to reduce the frequency of their seizures

What if a dose of Pexion® is missed?

Don't worry, just give the next dose at the normal time. There is no need to increase the dose.

Does Pexion® have any side effects?

Normally, dogs tolerate Pexion® very well. Side effects, such as increased hunger, thirst or activity levels or any gastrointestinal upsets are generally mild. If any of these do occur, they usually go away over time. If you are concerned about your dog for any reason, please contact your vet for advice.

Will my dog still have seizures while they are taking Pexion®?

It is very unusual for any dog with epilepsy to become completely seizure free even after they have begun receiving medication. Pexion®, like all epilepsy medications, will work to reduce the number of seizures that your dog will have rather than eliminate them completely.

What will my dog's life be like on Pexion®?

As dogs with primary epilepsy are healthy in all other respects there is no reason why your dog should not go on to live a full and happy life.

Occasionally it may not be possible to control a dog's seizures regardless of which medications they receive. Your vet will be able to provide information on what you can do if this is the case.



Visit www.dogswithepilepsy.com.au

THERE ARE A MILLION REASONS WHY OWNERS LOVE THEIR DOGS

We want to keep
it that way



Remember to contact your
vet if you are concerned
about your dog's epilepsy

Pexion[®]

For all the reasons.

References:

1. Monteiro R *et al.* *J. Small Anim Pract.* 2012; 53: 526–530. 2. Tipold A. Clinical efficacy and safety of imepitoin in comparison with phenobarbital for the control of idiopathic epilepsy in dogs. *J. vet. Pharmacol. Therap* 2014.

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