

MEDICATION FOR URINE MARKING AND ANXIETY IN CATS



There are many medications available to help treat anxiety in cats. Depending on the severity of the case, we use pheromones (“Feliway”), clomipramine, fluoxetine, alprazolam, and/or other medications.

CLOMIPRAMINE:

Studies have shown that Clomipramine can be effective for urine marking in cats. This medication is FDA approved for use in dogs as the brand name “Clomicalm.” This medication is available as a tablet or capsule.

As with any medication which has desired effects (reducing urine marking), there is a chance it has effects which may be less desired. In cats, the most common undesired effects are sedation and dry mouth. Obviously, we are giving this medication to change behavior and elimination in a good way. There is a low risk this medication can make your cat uninhibited and it may become more or less friendly, more or less aggressive, more or less active, or more or less well-behaved.

Most cats starting Clomipramine are otherwise healthy and not on medications. If your cat is on any other medication when starting clomipramine, or starts a new medication while on Clomipramine, make sure your vet is aware of all of your pet’s medications. The use of this medication may need to be altered if used in conjunction with other behavior-altering medication (such as tricyclic antidepressants, SSRIs, and MAOIs) and you need to discuss with your veterinarian before giving this medication with cimetidine, cisapride, certain sedatives, dextromethorphan, rifampin, and certain other medications.

FLUOXETINE:

In cats that have serious anxiety issues, we may use a medication called Fluoxetine to reduce anxiety and other behavior problems, such as urine marking. This medication is FDA approved for use in dogs as the brand name “Reconcile.” Since most cats are smaller than most dogs, and often do not take pills well, we usually use a liquid form of the medication.

As with any medication which has desired effects, there is a chance it has effects which may be less desired. In cats, the most common undesired effects are reduced appetite, behavior change, and change in elimination patterns.



Obviously, we are giving this medication to change behavior and elimination in a good way. There is a low risk this medication can make your cat uninhibited and it may become more or less friendly, more or less aggressive, more or less active, or more or less well-behaved. Most cats starting Fluoxetine are otherwise healthy and not on medications. If your cat is on any other medication when starting Fluoxetine, or starts a new medication while on Fluoxetine, make sure your vet is aware of all of your pet's medications. This medication should not be given in conjunction with other behavior-altering medication (such as tricyclic antidepressants, SSRIs, and MAOIs, diazepam, alprazolam) and you need to discuss with your veterinarian before giving this medication with diuretics, insulin, certain anesthetics, cyproheptadine, phenytoin, warfarin, propranolol or other beta-blockers, and certain other medications. Fluoxetine should not be stopped abruptly. When your cat is ready to stop taking Fluoxetine, please slowly taper your cat off the medication over the course of about 2 weeks by decreasing the dose by a small amount of every day.

ALPRAZOLAM

In cats that have serious anxiety issues, we may use a medication called Alprazolam to reduce anxiety and other behavior problems, such as urine marking. This medication is FDA approved for use in humans as the brand name "Xanax." This medication is available in a liquid and a pill form (the pill form is available as a generic).

As with any medication which has desired effects, there is a chance it has effects which may be less desired. In cats, the most common undesired effects are sedation, behavior change, and change in elimination patterns. Obviously, we are giving this medication to change behavior and elimination in a good way. There is a low risk this medication can make your cat uninhibited and it may become more or less friendly, more or less aggressive, more or less active, or more or less well-behaved.

Most cats starting Alprazolam are otherwise healthy and not on medications. If your cat is on any other medication when starting Alprazolam, or starts a new medication while on Alprazolam, make sure your vet is aware of all of your pet's medications. Dose of this or other medications may need to be altered if used in conjunction with other behavior-altering medication (such as tricyclic antidepressants, fluoxetine, etc) and you need to discuss with your veterinarian before giving this medication with antacids, sedatives, or anesthetics, digoxin, certain antibiotics, and antifungals, rifampin, and certain other medications to ensure that all medications can be given safely.