• Be satisfied that the person who will use the product is competent to do so safely, and must advise on safe administration and any warnings or contra-indications.
  
  For example, the pharmacist should emphasise any safety precautions:
  
  – Directions to wear gloves or wash hands after use
  – Restrictions on children petting animals after administration with spot-on products
  – Restrictions on bathing of animals or allowing animals to swim in water courses after administration with spot-on products

• Not supply more than the minimum amount required for the treatment
  
• The Regulations allow pharmacists to break open packages for the purposes of supply, except the immediate packaging of an injectable product.

• Ensure that the medicine is labelled correctly
  
  In particular, if the product is supplied in a container other than the marked pack, the container must be suitably labelled and sufficient information supplied to enable the product to be used safely (this could be the SPC or the package leaflet).

• Record and report any adverse events involving the medicine promptly
  
  – Adverse events should be reported to the VMD using the online form on our website.

Record Keeping

Pharmacists must keep all documents relating to the receipt or supply of POM-V and FOM-V products for at least 5 years, showing:

• The date
• The name of the veterinary medicine
• The batch number
• The quantity
• The name and address of supplier or recipient
• The name and address of prescriber and a copy of the prescription
  
  (if a written prescription)

If a pharmacist supplies veterinary medicines on prescription, there is a legal requirement for a detailed audit of these medicines to be conducted at least once a year. This requirement may be satisfied by a system linking incoming and outgoing transactions with stock held, in combination with an annual or more frequent stock take.

Responsibilities when Supplying Veterinary Medicines

A pharmacist has specific responsibilities when supplying a veterinary medicine (other than AVM-GSL) in order to ensure that it is used appropriately. The pharmacist must be present when it is handed over, unless the pharmacist authorises each transaction individually beforehand and is satisfied that the person handing it over is competent to do so. Note that this differs from the legal situation regarding supply of pharmacy and prescription-only medicines to a human patient which requires a pharmacist to be physically present at the premises when these medicines are handed over.

In particular, a pharmacist prescribing a product classified as POM-VPS or supplying a product classified as NFA-VPS must:

• Be satisfied that the person who will use the product is competent to do so safely, and must advise on safe administration and any warnings or contra-indications.

  For example, the pharmacist should emphasise any safety precautions:

  – Directions to wear gloves or wash hands after use
  – Restrictions on children petting animals after administration with spot-on products
  – Restrictions on bathing of animals or allowing animals to swim in water courses after administration with spot-on products

• Not supply more than the minimum amount required for the treatment

• The Regulations allow pharmacists to break open packages for the purposes of supply, except the immediate packaging of an injectable product.

• Ensure that the medicine is labelled correctly

  In particular, if the product is supplied in a container other than the marked pack, the container must be suitably labelled and sufficient information supplied to enable the product to be used safely (this could be the SPC or the package leaflet).

• Record and report any adverse events involving the medicine promptly

  – Adverse events should be reported to the VMD using the online form on our website.

• Be satisfied that the medicine is appropriate for the animal and condition to be treated

  As an example, the pharmacist should consider asking the following questions as appropriate:

  – When was the last treatment?
  – Age and weight of animal?
  – Any concurrent medication?
  – Any other disease?

Use of Human Medicines in Animals

Human medicines can be used in animals if a suitable authorised veterinary medicine is not available, but only under the authority of a veterinary surgeon in accordance with the prescribing cascade. The prescribing cascade is an EU initiative which increases the range of medicines available to veterinary surgeons. Further information on the cascade, including requirements for prescriptions and labelling can be found in the Veterinary Medicines Regulations and Veterinary Medicines Guidance Note 13; links to which are available from the VMD website.

Pharmacists must not otherwise supply human medicines over the counter if they are intended for animal administration, even where oral authorisation from a veterinary surgeon has been given – a written prescription is required.

Further Information

Further information including a link to the Veterinary Medicines Regulations, Veterinary Medicines Guidance Notes and other VMD information leaflets may be obtained via the VMD website (www.vmd.defra.gov.uk).

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society’s professional guide for pharmacists – Medicines, Ethics and Practice is also a useful reference (www.rpharms.com/support/mep.asp).

You can also phone the VMD on 01932 336911 for any additional assistance about veterinary medicines, or visit our website at www.vmd.defra.gov.uk.

You can also reach us by e-mail at: postmaster@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk

Internet Retail of Veterinary Medicines

Veterinary medicines (prescription and non-prescription) may be supplied via the internet. However, the premises from which the internet retailer operates must be registered and inspected in accordance with the legislation and the transactions are subject to the same legislative controls as for a community pharmacy, unless they are only supplying AVM-GSL medicines.

Under the VMD’s ‘Accredited Internet Retailer Scheme’, online retailers who meet the VMD’s accreditation criteria are able to display a special logo on their website: the VMD’s Internet Retailer logo. This scheme is a means of facilitating self-regulation by UK-based internet retailers supplying veterinary medicines. Further information about the scheme is available on the VMD’s website.

Further Information

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Introduction
This leaflet explains the specific requirements for prescribing and supplying veterinary medicines by pharmacists. In addition to supplying medicines against a prescription from a veterinary surgeon, pharmacists may also supply certain medicines against a ‘pharmacist’s prescription’. The range of veterinary medicines that pharmacists may prescribe includes products for the treatment or prevention of worms, fleas and other parasites in a range of species including dogs, cats, poultry and horses. Some vaccines are also available on a pharmacist’s prescription.

This leaflet does not discuss wholesale supply of veterinary medicines. If necessary, please refer to Veterinary Medicines Guidance Notes No. 3 (Guidance for Retailers) and No. 8 (Wholesale Dealers’ Authorisation for Veterinary Medicines) on the VMD website (www.vmd.defra.gov.uk).

Regulation of Veterinary Medicines in the UK
The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), is responsible for the authorisation of veterinary medicines in the UK and for monitoring these medicines following authorisation. The authorisation of veterinary medicines is not very different to the authorisation of medicines. If necessary, please refer to Veterinary Medicines Guidance Notes No. 3 (Guidance for Retailers) and No. 8 (Wholesale Dealers’ Authorisation for Veterinary Medicines) on the VMD website.

The existing distribution categories for veterinary medicines in the UK are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prescription medicines</th>
<th>POM-V</th>
<th>Prescription Only Medicine – Veterinarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>POM-VPS</td>
<td>Prescription Only Medicine – Veterinarian, Pharmacist, Suitably Qualified Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-prescription medicines</td>
<td>NFA-VPS</td>
<td>Non-Food Animal – Veterinarian, Pharmacist, Suitably Qualified Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AVM-GSL</td>
<td>Authorised Veterinary Medicine – General Sales List</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest level of control is the POM-V category. This would include veterinary medicines containing controlled drugs and those intended for administration only following a diagnosis and clinical assessment by a veterinary surgeon.

Medicines in the POM-V category must also be prescribed, but this can be by a pharmacist, SOP or a veterinary surgeon, whereas NFA-VPS products do not require a prescription. Products in these categories must be provided with appropriate advice at point of sale in order to ensure that the products will be properly administered. Medicines intended for use in food-producing animals would normally be classified as POM-VPS. The NFA-VPS category contains many of the dog and cat worm and flea control products.

Distribution Categories of Veterinary Medicines
Distribution categories provide controls on the supply of veterinary medicines to help ensure that appropriate advice is given at the point of sale so that products can be used safely and effectively.

The distribution category of a veterinary medicine is decided by the VMD following evaluation of scientific data provided by the Marketing Authorisation Holder. The distribution category uses the concept of a ‘registered qualified person’. A registered qualified person may be:

- a UK registered veterinarian
- a UK registered pharmacist (operating from registered pharmacy premises)
- a UK registered suitably qualified person (SOP). An SOP is an individual who must be suitably trained and qualified and is included on the SOP register of the Animal Medicines Training Regulatory Authority (AMTRA) Category. This category may include veterinary nurses, agricultural merchants, pet shop personnel and internet retailers.

Prescriptions
As described above, POM-V and POM-VPS medicinal products may only be supplied in accordance with a prescription. A prescription does not need to be written, but may be oral. This would be appropriate in the situation where a pharmacist prescribes a POM-VPS medicine and also supplies it. However, if a veterinary medicine is to be supplied by a person other than the prescriber, then the prescription must be written. A pharmacist supplying under a written prescription must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the prescription has been written and signed by a person entitled to prescribe the product. A written prescription is valid for 6 months (or such shorter period as stipulated on the prescription). Prescriptions must include the following information:

- The name, address and telephone number of the prescriber.
- The qualifications enabling the person to prescribe the product.
- The name and address of the owner or keeper.
- The identification (including the species) of the animal(s) to be treated.
- The premises at which the animals are kept (if different from the owner/keeper’s).