

The AAFP understands that as a result of discussions between the FDA and Boehringer-Ingelheim, the following warning has been placed on Metacam, effective September 2010: Repeated use of meloxicam in cats has been associated with acute renal failure and death. Do not administer additional doses of injectable or oral meloxicam to cats.

The AAFP believes that practitioners should follow this warning, as failure to do so could expose practitioners to liability. Should a practitioner choose to use any drug off-label, he or she should:

1. Consider the condition of the cat and determine, in his or her professional opinion, if off-label use is warranted.
2. If there is an alternate approved drug, practitioners should consider utilizing that drug.
3. Practitioners should obtain written owner consent prior to off-label use. Consent should include discussion of warnings included in package inserts.
4. State licensing boards may have specific regulations covering extra-label use, and you should consult with your State VMA regarding any regulations that may exist in your State.

The AAFP wishes to clarify that when it co-produced the Long-term Use of NSAIDs in Cats guidelines with the ISFM, the above warning label associated with the use of Metacam in cats (the guidelines were published in July 2010) was not required, thus the warning was not noted in the guidelines regarding use of Metacam.