

## **Motion Sickness Drug**

Maropitant (Cerenia, Pfizer) was launched last year as an antiemetic.

The product works by blocking binding of the neurotransmitter substance P to neurokin 1 receptors in the brain. These receptors are found at high levels in the part of the brain where the vomiting response is generated.

It is available as tablets and an injection, and has now been reformulated as tablets for treatment of motion sickness in dogs, which requires a much higher dose. It has been launched as the first specific treatment for this common condition. Pfizer's own research suggests that about one in six dogs is affected.

The drug should be administered about two hours before commencing the journey, and is effective for twelve hours. Treatment may be repeated once daily for a maximum of two consecutive days.

Ironically, administering Cerenia on an empty stomach may cause the dog to vomit, so a light snack before dosing is recommended. The tablets should not be wrapped in food as this delays the onset of action.

Cerenia is not a sedative and some motion-sick dogs may show nausea-like signs during travel. Studies showed 93% of treated dogs did not vomit on a two hour journey compared with 48% of controls. Nausea with or without vomiting is a common cause of fear of travelling. Hopefully if vomiting is prevented this will simplify the behavioural treatment for fear of travelling in the future.

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