

Using Zycortal **5** golden guidelines:



**ZYCORTAL<sup>®</sup>**  
HIDDEN DISEASE. VISIBLE ANSWER.

# 1

## Manage client expectations at the beginning

- a) It may take several visits and multiple monitoring blood tests to find the right dose of Zycortal and a glucocorticoid for each dog. This is also true for dogs previously receiving fludrocortisone therapy
- b) Dogs being treated properly should be happy dogs with a normal appetite. However it is important to remember that they are not normal dogs. They have a chronic disease and will need lifelong medication and monitoring
- c) Owners should understand that the dose of Zycortal is adjusted by assessing electrolytes and clinical signs, whereas the glucocorticoid (mainly in the form of prednisolone) dose is adjusted according to the clinical history (so their observations matter)

# 2

## All dogs must receive daily glucocorticoid treatment titrated to effect based on clinical signs

- a) Glucocorticoid deficiency causes lethargy (which can be severe), inappetence, weakness and gastrointestinal signs
- b) Equally too much glucocorticoid causes polyuria/polydipsia, poor hair regrowth and increased bodyweight. Remember too much Zycortal can also cause polyuria/polydipsia
- c) The starting prednisolone dose rate is 0.2-0.4 mg/kg q24h for newly diagnosed cases. The final dose varies between individual animals and a good proportion of dogs will ultimately be stable at 0.05-0.1 mg/kg q24h. For dogs requiring particularly small doses of glucocorticoid, cortisone acetate could be considered as an alternative
- d) Glucocorticoid dose adjustments should be 25 to 50% of the previous dose. Try to wait two weeks to assess the effect
- e) At times of metabolic stress or illness, the glucocorticoid dose may need to be increased (2 to 4 times)

# 3

## Use a Zycortal dosing interval of either every 4 weeks, or every month: give a dose appropriate to that interval

- a) The preferred approach of European & US endocrinologists is to adjust the dose and keep the interval constant, rather than adjusting the interval and keeping the dose constant
- b) The initial Zycortal dose is 2.2 mg/kg subcutaneously. Should a dose change be required, it is more likely that dogs will require a dose reduction than a dose increase
- c) A benefit of a four weekly or a monthly interval is the ease, both for the vet and the client, in booking repeat appointments

## Evaluate Zycortal treatment success at days 10 and 28 after every dose, until stable

- a) Decide if you are giving too much or too little Zycortal to each dog by assessing electrolytes and clinical signs
- b) Aim to keep potassium and sodium within their reference ranges (RRs) throughout the dosing interval
- c) Adjust the Zycortal dose at day 28 in 10-20% steps with the aim of achieving electrolytes within their RRs at day 10 and day 28
  - i) Monitoring electrolytes at day 10 enables assessment of the peak effect of the dose
  - ii) Monitoring electrolytes at day 28 enables assessment of the duration of the dose
- d) Electrolytes should be within their RRs before administering a repeat Zycortal dose
  - i) If potassium is below and/or sodium is above their RRs at day 28:
    - (1) Do not inject Zycortal, even at a lower dose
    - (2) Repeat electrolyte testing every 7 days until they are within their RRs
    - (3) Then re-inject Zycortal at a lower dose and recheck at day 10 and day 28 post-injection
  - ii) If potassium is above and/or sodium is below their RRs at day 28 Zycortal must be injected. The dose should be increased, and/or the dose interval shortened
- e) Once the dose has been determined, a stable dog will have electrolytes within their respective RRs at days 10 and 28 during at least two consecutive treatment cycles using that same dose. Thereafter dogs should be reassessed every 4-6 months at the time of injection.
- f) In cases of lack of expected efficacy; before increasing the Zycortal dose, consider whether the dog was adequately hydrated at injection, the product was adequately re-suspended, and whether the injection was successfully administered

# 4

# 5

## If you have problems then get help

- a) Check laboratory results that do not look right. e.g. contamination of the sample with potassium EDTA from a haematology tube can cause an artefactual increase in serum potassium
- b) If a dog receiving Zycortal therapy is ill:
  - i) Giving more glucocorticoid is rarely wrong
  - ii) Consider potassium supplementation if the dog is symptomatic and potassium <3 mmol/l.
- c) Contact Dechra Technical Services for support regarding individual cases

ZYCORTAL: Zycortal contains desoxycortone pivalate

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