

Antihistamines for Pets

Your pet's weight today: _____ lbs

Several over-the-counter antihistamines are generally safe and can be effective for pet allergies. The doses below are for your reference. Any antihistamine can make your pet sleepy. If you notice any side effects, discontinue the medication and let us know. Try to get the dose as close as you can with the tablet size available.

To calculate the dose, multiply your pet's weight by the dose given, then compare to available tablet sizes to determine how much to give.

For example, a 10 pound dog wants to take Zyrtec.

10 pounds x 0.25-mg per pound = 2.5-mg

10 pounds x 0.5-mg per pound = 5-mg

So the Zyrtec dose for this dog would be 2.5-mg to 5-mg.

For a 10-mg tablet, it would be $\frac{1}{4}$ (2.5-mg) to $\frac{1}{2}$ (5-mg) of a tablet by mouth once daily.

***NOTE: DO NOT USE ANY ANTIHISTAMINES WITH DECONGESTANTS IN THEM, as many pets can't tolerate these. If you have to pick it up from the pharmacy window, it IS NOT the right product! DO NOT USE sustained or extended release tablets as the initial dose will be too much!**

Cetirizine (ZYRTEC): 0.25-mg to 0.5-mg per pound for dogs, 5-mg total for cats. These can be given once daily, preferably in the evening. It is available in 5-mg and 10-mg tablets. Do not use with other nervous system sedatives like phenobarbitol.

Chlorpheniramine (CHLOR-TRIMETRON): 0.1-mg to 0.2-mg per pound for dogs, 2-mg to 4-mg total dose for cats. This can be given twice daily. It is available in 2-mg and 4-mg tablets, or 2mg/5mL liquid. Do not use if your pet has urinary obstruction, prostate problems, glaucoma, hyperthyroidism, high blood pressure, or heart disease.

Clemastine (TAVIST): 0.1-mg to 0.2-mg per pound for dogs, 0.34-mg to 0.68-mg total per cat. This can be given twice daily. It is available in 1.34-mg or 2.68-mg tablets. A liquid is available by prescription only. Do not use if your pet has urinary obstruction, prostate problems, glaucoma, gastrointestinal obstruction, or severe heart disease. Don't use with nervous system sedatives, like phenobarbitol, or antidepressants.

Diphenhydramine (BENADRYL): 1-mg per pound for dogs and cats. This can be given twice daily. It is available in 12.5-mg or 25-mg tablets. A 12.5mg/5mL liquid is available. Do not use if your pet has urinary obstruction, prostate problems, glaucoma, seizures, hyperthyroidism, high blood pressure, or heart disease. Do not use with other nervous system sedatives like phenobarbitol.

Fexofenadine (ALLEGRA): 0.9-mg to 2.3-mg per pound in dogs, up to twice daily. 10-mg to 15-mg total per cat, up to twice daily. Some studies have shown that a dose of 7.3-mg per pound given once daily for dogs is ideal (Plevnik et al. 2009). Side effects can include sedation, depression, and gastrointestinal issues.

Loratadine (CLARITIN): 0.1-mg to 0.5-mg per pound once daily (or divide the total dose in half and give twice daily) to dogs, 0.25-mg per pound to cats once daily. A 5-mg and 10-mg tablet size is available. Do not use for pets with KCS (dry eye) or severe liver or kidney problems. Do not use if giving ketoconazole (an antifungal drug) or cimetidine (an antacid).