

## **Compounding for Vets: Specialized Medications for Special Animals**

The cats, dogs, rabbits, ferrets and other animals that live with us often transcend being just pets, and become integral members of our families. When they get sick or need medication, we want to give them the best care possible, because they depend on us. Most often the veterinarian has the medication that is needed on hand. But many times a veterinarian will need a reduction in dose, or a flavor change, or need to be creative with the route of administration. With compounding, the animal's owner, veterinarian, and pharmacist create a team approach to best help the animal patient.

Custom compounding does just that - we make a final product based on what the doctor wants and considers best for the animal. With compounding, tablet or capsule medications can be combined into a single oral solution or suspension. Oral prescriptions can be compounded into a topical gel. Often times a compounding pharmacy can create a medication for a product no longer available commercially.

There are times when a veterinarian needs to be creative in dispensing medication. An avian patient that has difficulty taking medications may get it's prescriptions by inhaling the drug via a nebulizer. Implantable, sterile "beads" containing a medication have been formulated by a veterinarian and compounded by a pharmacist to treat disease states in rabbits. Horses with white line disease can get their fungal medication combined with super-glue.

We have had many success stories. We have put bitter tasting medications into a triple fish puree for our feline patients. Other drugs have been placed into a topical gel to be rubbed into both a cat's and dog's inner ear. We have created banana-flavored paste for our chameleon and long-tail macaque (monkey) patients. For a dog who had difficulty swallowing and who had multiple medications, we created a custom rectal suppository.

Solving medication problems is the hallmark of compounding and is something we love to do, especially for our animal patients. Our philosophy is to treat our veterinary patients as we would our human infant patients; the animals depend on us for their care and well being and are usually smaller so dosages have to be more exact. Also, animal patients can not communicate problems to us as effectively as an adult human. Working together with owners and veterinarians, compounding pharmacists can bring unique solutions for a special patient population.

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Thomas Slaughter, Pharm. D. holds a Doctorate of Pharmacy from Mercer University. With state of the art equipment, Mulberry Pharmacy can formulate a creative compound to maximize therapeutic outcomes. You may contact him at the Mulberry Pharmacy, 1009 Church Ave, 863.943.1203.