Pharmacies compound medications to:

- Make a strength or dosage form of a medication that is not commercially available
- Flavor a medication
- Remove unwanted inactive ingredients that are toxic or allergens for pets
- Create a product that is easier and more convenient for owners to administer

What is compounding?
The United States Pharmacopeia (USP) defines compounding as “the preparation, mixing, assembling, altering, packaging, and labeling of a drug, drug-delivery device, or device” as directed by a licensed practitioner to meet the needs of each individual patient. Since these products are made specifically to the prescriber’s instructions, they are not studied or approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the pharmacy often requires more time to accurately make and prepare the medication.

Why is the expiration date shorter than my pet’s other medications?
Since the FDA does not approve each individual compound and compounding process, the pharmacy relies on studies and information from independent, nonprofit organizations such as USP to provide insight on how long a medication is good for since it may not contain the preservatives or other similar ingredients. By law, all compounded prescriptions have a “compounded drug product” as well as an “expiration date” auxiliary label. Like all other medications, compounds should not be used after the expiration date as they can be harmful or may not work.
What kinds of medications can be compounded?

We compound both sterile and non-sterile compounds to meet patients needs. Non-sterile compounds include many otic solutions, intranasal solutions, oral suspensions, oral capsules, and transdermal preparations. Sterile compounds include eye medications and injections for body tissues and the blood stream.

What are the risks of compounding and how can I ensure my pet’s medications are safe?

Compounded drugs can address important medication needs, but unfortunately, they have risks when it comes to safety, quality, and effectiveness since they are not FDA approved. Strength of the medication can vary per batch of medication due to differences in compounding skill and capabilities of equipment used to compound. There are also concerns for quality issues, such as contamination from equipment or the environment used to compound. This is a more significant risk for medications that are compounded as they don't go through the same end product testing that is required of manufactured products. Our pharmacists and veterinarians work very hard to follow current USP compounding practices and guidelines and have numerous safety steps and double checks in place to ensure that your pet receives the highest quality compounded medication.

References

Frequently asked questions about pharmaceutical compounding [Internet]. American Pharmacist’s Association (APhA). [cited 2022Mar29]. Available from: https://pharmacist.com/Practice/Patient-Care-Services/Compounding/Compounding-FAQs


Do you have additional questions? Please contact the University of Illinois Medication Dispensary at 217-333-5329 and provide your name, phone number, and question(s).