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Inhalation Therapy

Why Inhalation Therapy?

Asthma is a controllable but not curable disease, usually requiring lifelong treatment. Conventional oral corticosteroid (cortisone) treatment over time may predispose your cat to systemic side effects including diabetes, infections, excessive weight gain, and behavioral changes. Inhalation treatment delivers corticosteroids directly to the lungs, thereby avoiding potential systemic side effects. In addition, when asthma flare-ups or life-threatening asthma attacks occur, inhalation therapy can speed bronchodilators to the lungs, often easing signs in seconds to minutes.

How Is It Done In Cats?

The AeroKat™ Feline Aerosol Chamber, a tubular spacer device specially designed for cats, allows accurate and effective delivery of asthma medications from the same inhalers used to treat human asthmatics. A corticosteroid, sold as Flovent® inhaler (Glaxo Wellcome), is the primary maintenance treatment delivered to the lungs using the AeroKat chamber. Albuterol, a bronchodilator, is also available by inhaler and is used to treat asthma flare-ups and more severe asthmatic attacks.

How Does the Treatment Work?

The AeroKat™ Feline Aerosol Chamber delivers an aerosol cloud to your cat's lungs from an inhaler attached to the chamber. This is usually a one person job with your cat sitting on your lap as you perform the breathing treatments. Treatments take less than 5 minutes and are administered approximately every 12 hours. Before you start inhalation therapy, *The Cat Doctor* staff will teach you proper treatment technique and cleaning protocols. In some instances, oral medications will be prescribed early in the course of treatment. These may include short-term oral corticosteroids, antibiotics, and dewormers.

Cost of Inhalation Therapy

You can purchase the AeroKat™ Feline Aerosol Chamber at *The Cat Doctor* for \$55.00. This is a onetime purchase.

You will be instructed on the frequency and dosing of inhaler treatments. We begin therapy using a 220ug Flovent® inhaler, administering two puffs twice daily. The cost of 220ug Flovent® inhaler canisters varies from \$70-140, depending on the source of purchase. In the beginning phases of treatment each canister lasts approximately one month. Over the next few months, ideally at monthly intervals, we taper to the lowest effective dose. Our goal is a lifelong maintenance dose of 110ug Flovent®, two puffs administered twice daily. The average cost of 110ug Flovent® inhaler canisters is \$60-100 per month. An albuterol inhaler will also be prescribed. Albuterol inhaler canisters retail for around \$18.00 and may last several months depending on need and frequency of use.

Although oral treatment may appear less expensive than inhalation therapy, total reduction in costs may be achieved over time if systemic side effects are avoided.

For detailed information regarding the use of the AeroKat inhalation chamber and inhaler therapy, visit www.aerokat.com.