

### Furosemide

**Furosemide** (brand names: Lasix®, Salix®, Disal®) has been prescribed for your pet as part of the treatment for congestive heart failure. Furosemide is a diuretic drug, that is, a drug that helps the body get rid of excess salt and water.

In states of heart failure, the body tries to compensate for poor cardiac function by increasing the amount of blood in the body. The kidneys “save” salt and water and the blood volume increases. When the heart is not functioning normally, it cannot cope with this increased load and fluid builds up in the lungs (“pulmonary edema”) and sometimes in the abdominal cavity (“ascites”). You may notice signs of fluid build-up in your pet as development of a cough, shortness of breath, or an increase in the size of the abdomen.

The addition of furosemide to your pet’s medication routine allows him or her to urinate more frequently and in larger amounts, thereby getting rid of excess fluid build-up. This medication is given in varying doses, depending on your pet’s underlying disease and his or her response to treatment. Sometimes adding other types of drugs (vasodilators or pimobendan) reduces the need for furosemide.

Common side effects of furosemide therapy include increased thirst and increased urination. *It is important that your pet has fresh water available always; do NOT restrict water intake.* If the increase in frequency of urination becomes a problem, ask your consulting veterinarian for advice. Furosemide use may lead to excessive dehydration or low potassium levels, especially if your pet is not eating well. This problem is usually detected when kidney function and “electrolytes” are measured (using a blood test) during re-evaluations of your pet’s progress.

If your pet becomes ill and stops eating and drinking while receiving furosemide, dehydration can occur very rapidly. Please contact your consulting veterinarian if your pet’s appetite or water consumption decreases.

The best way to treat problems due to cardiac medications is to prevent them or to “catch” the problem early. Please call your pet’s consulting veterinarian or cardiologist if you have any questions or problems with your pet’s cardiac therapy.