

## MEGESTROL ACETATE (MA) DISCLOSURE

A veterinarian will examine your cat to determine if she is a good candidate for megestrol acetate (MA) as a method of fertility control while awaiting spay surgery.

MA is an oral contraceptive that can be used to prevent pregnancy and estrus (heat) cycles in dogs and cats. While it has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in dogs, use of MA in cats is considered “off label.” This means that it has not been submitted to, reviewed, or approved by the FDA. Because the safety and effectiveness of MA have not been studied to the extent required for FDA approval, information available on its safety and effectiveness is from studies published in peer-reviewed scientific journals. Note, many common drugs used in veterinary medicine are considered off-label by FDA standards. MA is available from compounding pharmacies for off-label use.

**Giving MA to your cat:** MA is an oral medication. MA purchased from CAT will be supplied in syringes that are prefilled with the proper dosage. If you mix the medication in food, make sure no other animal eats the food. If you miss a dose, give the dose as soon as possible. If it’s almost time for the next dose, skip the missed dose, and continue with the regular schedule. Do not give two doses at once.

**Side effects:** Research strongly suggests side effects are more common with higher doses and longer durations of use. Some side effects may resolve once the cat is taken off the medication, others may be permanent.

Side effects associated with <i>low-dose</i> MA (2.5mg once a week up to 30 weeks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased hunger and weight gain (most common)</li> <li>• Behavioral changes i.e., increased friendliness or aggressiveness (most common)</li> <li>• Mammary gland swelling after 1st dose that resolves after 2<sup>nd</sup> dose (common)</li> <li>• Effects on fetal development such as stillborn or masculinization of kittens</li> <li>• Inability to lactate</li> </ul>
Side effects associated with <i>higher doses</i> (Greater than 2.5mg/cat per day)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uterine infections (requires emergency surgery)</li> <li>• Diabetes mellitus (often reversible but can be permanent)</li> <li>• Sustained mammary swelling or mammary cancer</li> <li>• Adrenal gland suppression (stress hormone changes)</li> </ul>

**Contact your veterinarian or emergency vet clinic if you suspect anything unusual or notice any of the signs below:**

- Discharge on your cat’s rear (contact a vet immediately)
- Lethargy or fever (contact a vet immediately)
- Shaking, collapse, or seizure (contact a vet immediately)
- Increased thirst and urination
- Decreased appetite
- Abnormal or firm abdominal swelling

If you think your cat may be pregnant or your concern is not urgent, please email (including any relevant photos) to [hospital@catadoptionteam.org](mailto:hospital@catadoptionteam.org).

**Handling precautions:** If contact with skin occurs wash off with soap and water. This drug may cause fetal harm and may represent a hazard to males or females who are actively trying to conceive, women who are pregnant or may become pregnant, and women who are breast feeding.

**For more information on MA,** please visit The Alliance for Contraception in Cats & Dogs’ [website](#) or email [hospital@catadoptionteam.org](mailto:hospital@catadoptionteam.org).