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| **Toronto Humane Society: Megestrol Acetate Protocol** |
| Approved by: Karen Ward | Effective date: 21 April, 2020 |
| Author: Linda Jacobson | Revision Date: 17 Jan 2021 updated (LJ) |
| Purpose | Provide guidelines for the safe use of MGA in cats |
| Risks | Some potentially serious adverse effects, disclosure required |
| Main Sources  | **Progestin contraceptives, ACC-D**<https://acc-d.org/available-products/progestin-contraceptives/covid-19-updates>**Maddie’s MGA FAQ** - Mike Greenberg<https://www.maddiesfund.org/megestrol-acetate-faq.htm?p=245c18ee-b6a3-4881-fa12-1dfaa9bafd6a>**Webinar – An emergency contraceptive option for cats during COVID-19 delayed surgery**, Joyce Briggs, Michael Greenberg, Julie Levy <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSWUWzgt-WU> |

**Background**

MGA is a synthetic progestin. It does not replace spay surgery but is a “tool in the toolkit” for preventing unwanted pregnancy in cats when surgery is delayed. This protocol was designed for use during the COVID-19 pandemic but MGA could also be used in carefully selected cases outside of the pandemic response. Use in cats is extra-label. This drug is not recommended as a long-term contraceptive and should only be used as a stop-gap until spay surgery can be performed.

**Indications**

For interim use to suppress heat and prevent pregnancy. For use in:

Homes where a cat is in heat and the behaviour is threatening the integrity of the human-animal bond;

Homes where there is a risk of unwanted pregnancy;

Colonies pending TNR, where the caregiver is able to get non-pregnant cats to take the medication.

**Individual dosing – low-dose MA**

Compounded liquid 10mg/mL, 6 month half-life

Do NOT crush dog tablets (Ovaban), can’t dose safely this way

**Not in heat:** 2.5mg per cat, orally/in food once a week, maximum 30 weeks

**In heat:** 5mg per cat once daily x 3d then 2.5mg per cat per week

Dose is approximately 0.625mg/kg, adjust up or down for very small or very large cats

Some colony caregivers may be able to dose individually to specific cats; in these situations this dose is preferred

**Colony dosing – micro-dose MA**

Can use at 0.1-0.2 mg/cat once a week, in colonies where individual dosing is not possible

Practically speaking, prescribe 1mg per cat per week

Unable to control how much each cat gets

Unlikely to be harmful but may not be effective

Recommend using multiple small plastic or metal plates/bowls to encourage each cat to get its own dose

DO NOT use paper, the drug will be absorbed into the paper

If unable to provide one plate per cat, provide as many as possible

**Warnings and contraindications**

1. **Wear gloves when handling**, can be absorbed through the skin
2. Do not use in kittens <4 mths of age – can cause uterine changes
3. **Contraindicated in pregnant cats** - can cause stillbirths, mummification, dystocia, kitten malformations, kitten masculinization. Can also cause mammary hyperplasia and queens may not be able to lactate as a result (no direct effect on lactation).
4. Safe for lactating queens
5. Safe for male cats (has no effect)
6. Gentle resuspend before using (suspension not solution)

**Adverse effects**



* The doses provided are low and much safer than doses used in the past
* Binds to glucocorticoid receptors. Diabetes and adrenocortical suppression may occur but are transient and stop when the drug is stopped; clinically significant AC suppression appears to be very rare

**Prescription and disclosure**

1. Telemedicine consult required, prescription only by a DVM
2. Disclosure needed, as well as ELDU disclosure – see disclosure package for colony caregivers
3. Cost to us for the compounded solution is approx. $2.15-$4.20 per mL, 4 doses per mL so approx. 50c-$1 per cat per week [Jan 2021]