

Thank you for entrusting the Veterinary Neurological Center with your pet's healthcare. Our goal is to provide you and your pet with the best possible service by addressing your unique concerns in a timely manner and providing the support you need to make the best decisions for your pet. The following information is meant to help you communicate with your neurologist, neurology resident and their support team, and guide you through the process of understanding and caring for your pet's neurological issue(s). [A digital version of this guide with links to associated online resources is available on our website at www.vetneuro.com.](#) Please let us know if there is anything we can do to improve your experience. We look forward to helping you care for your pet.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Neurology is a complex subject and can be difficult to understand, especially during stressful times. Our doctors do their best to convey information to you that will equip you with the tools to make the best decisions for your pet. If you have any type of question or concern, you may either address your doctor in person, call, or email the VNC. We are here to help. You can also go to our website to access the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) section, as well as review an extensive neurological glossary and write-ups about neurological diseases and disorders.

Discharge Instructions and Referral Summary

You and your primary veterinarian should receive [Discharge Instructions 24-48 hours after your pet's appointment.](#) Depending on your neurology doctor's caseload, you may receive the Discharge Instructions at the end of your appointment. If you do not receive these instructions per the guidelines above, please contact the VNC as soon as possible.

CONTACTING THE VNC

Calling During Regular Office Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Saturday

If you have a question, concern or update regarding your pet, please call the VNC and one of our Client Service Representatives (CSR) will be able to help immediately. They may need to speak to a doctor or leave a message for them in between their appointments and procedures. In which case, you may receive a response immediately or receive a call back (usually by a CSR) as soon as possible.

Calling After Hours: 5 p.m. to 9 a.m., Monday-Sunday

Non-emergent Calls: [Voicemail messages left after hours will be returned the next morning.](#) A doctor is on call during the day on Sunday and will return voicemail messages if an immediate response is necessary.

Urgent Calls: [If your pet is in need of immediate veterinary attention after hours, please contact your primary veterinarian or an emergency animal hospital \(for a list of emergency animal hospitals in your area go to the Links section of our website\).](#) If you are not near a computer, you may contact the Blue Pearl Specialty and Emergency Hospital in Glendale at 602-995-3757. If you call this hospital, inform them of the area you are calling from, so they can direct you to the nearest clinic. [If your veterinarian or the Blue Pearl veterinarian would like to discuss the neurological status of your pet, he or she may speak with one of our doctors by calling the VNC's Emergency Consult Telephone Line.](#) This phone number has been circulated to all veterinarians in Arizona and is dedicated to veterinarians who require an immediate consult with a VNC doctor.

Common Neurological Emergencies

- **Seizures:** [Pets thought to have seizures should be examined by a veterinarian as soon as possible.](#) The condition of rapidly recurring seizures without recovery between episodes is called status epilepticus and is considered a serious medical emergency. Please visit our website to learn more about seizures and epilepsy.
- **Limb Weakness:** [Patients showing signs of limb paresis/paralysis or weakness should be examined by a veterinarian as soon as possible; paresis can lead to paralysis which is generally considered a medical emergency.](#) Please visit our website to learn more about signs of limb weakness, paresis, and paralysis.

Patient Updates

When contacting us with an update about your pet's condition, including reports of seizures, [please let us know what medications your pet is currently taking.](#)

Corresponding Online between Monday-Sunday, 24 hours per day

Emails (vncmail@vetneuro.com) or online submissions (www.vetneuro.com>Client Forms) will be addressed as soon as possible, usually by the end of the day during regular business hours. All messages will be returned no later than the end of the next business day.

APPOINTMENT CANCELLATIONS

Please provide 24-hour notice for the cancellation and/or rescheduling of appointments. Should you arrive late for your appointment, our staff will do our best to accommodate you, however, we cannot guarantee your doctor will be able to see you and your pet immediately.

LAB TEST RESULTS

The return of pet lab test results can vary between 4-14 days and is dependent upon the particular lab tests that were ordered. Fungal cultures can take up to 3 weeks for final results. A CSR will contact you when the final results have been received and reviewed by your doctor. If you are expecting a call and have not heard from the VNC in a timely manner, do not hesitate to contact us.

PRESCRIPTION REFILLS

For established clients needing prescription refills, you may have your pharmacy fax a Prescription Refill Request to 602-437-5425, or complete our Online Prescription Refill Request Form. **Please allow 72 hours for your VNC doctor to review your pet's chart and verify the refill is appropriate.** Refills on prescriptions are authorized only during normal office hours.

Please note that needing a refill is often an indication for a recheck appointment, therefore, you may be asked to make an appointment prior to additional refills being authorized. Additionally, you should confirm with your pharmacist that the prescription has been authorized before picking it up.

WEBSITE RESOURCES

There are many resources on our website that you may find helpful in understanding and treating your pet's neurological condition including neurological signs and diseases section, neurology overview, glossary of terms, services we provide (diagnostic, medical, and surgical), helpful links, and frequently asked questions. Please always feel free to call and/or email us with any questions, concerns, or comments. Some pages which will be helpful when corresponding with our hospital include:

Online Correspondence

<u>General Correspondence Form</u>	<i>Use this form to submit questions, comments and updates about your pet. Images may also be uploaded, including pet photos for inclusion on our Patient Pictures page of our website.</i>
<u>Seizure Report</u>	<i>Use this form to report the details of your pet's seizure(s) to your doctor(s) at the VNC. The doctor(s) will analyze this information and if you have questions or if changes are necessary to your pet's treatment plan, we will contact you shortly.</i>
<u>Prescription Refill Request</u>	<i>Requests to obtain refills for a particular medication may be submitted online using this form. Once you have submitted the form, your medication will be ready for pickup within 2 business days at the VNC or your local pharmacy (depending on your selection).</i>
<u>Client Survey</u>	<i>We strive to provide excellent veterinary care. In a few days following your initial appointment, we will email you a survey to provide us with feedback to help us maintain the quality of service you expect.</i>

Additional Online Resources for Clients

- Understanding Your Pets Condition**
 - [Neurological Signs and Diseases*](#)
 - [Neurology Overview](#)
 - [Glossary](#)
- VNC Services**
 - [Diagnostic*](#)
 - [Treatment \(Medical and Surgical\)*](#)
- Patient Services**
 - [Urinary Catheter Instructions](#)
- General Questions**
 - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 - [Helpful Links](#)

* Section of the website with multiple pages

PHARMACEUTICALS - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where can I find more information about the drugs my pet is taking?

Drugs can have many different uses, as well as many possible side effects. While the doctor should have discussed both the specific use of the drug your pet is taking and the potential side effects, additional information about your pet's prescription drugs can be found at www.plumbsveterinarydrugs.com and click on search drugs to search for the drug by name. You can then click on links detailing dosage, interactions, side-effects, and a general overview of the drug called the Veterinary Medication Guide.

When and where should I have a drug compounded?

Typically, drugs will be compounded when the dosage either needs to be exact or if the dosage is a division too small or difficult to accurately dose using pre-manufactured drugs. Compounded drugs will be compounded at local compounding pharmacies of which a list will be provided so that you can find a pharmacy close to you. Generally, we do not use compounded drugs unless it is absolutely necessary. In order to ensure exact, consistent manufacturing of the drugs we prescribe our patients, we typically use pre-manufactured drugs

How do I get drugs at the lowest price possible?

GoodRx is an online service that allows you to compare prices and find coupons for discounts on prescription drugs. A GoodRx will be provided to you upon check-out if you need to get medications we do not offer at the VNC. For more information and to compare prices and search for coupons go to www.goodrx.com. Additionally, the VNC has compiled a list of pharmacies who have the best prices for specific drugs which can be provided upon request.

PHARMACEUTICALS - SOME SPECIFIC DRUG INFORMATION

Below is a list of commonly prescribed medication and specific information about those drugs. If you would like learn more about these drugs or others, further information about medications can be found at 1800petmeds.com

Bromides - Potassium and Sodium Bromide

Used as a primary or adjunctive therapy for seizure disorders in dogs to control seizures that are not adequately controlled with other medications such as phenobarbital. The VNC carries Potassium Bromide. The goal of this medication is to have a certain "therapeutic" level of the medication in the patient's bloodstream at all times in order to minimize the occurrence of seizures. Regular blood tests are necessary to monitor this level to make sure the blood concentration is neither too high or low. Transient sedation (lasting up to 3 weeks) may be noticed when starting bromide treatment. When levels are too high, bromide toxicity presents as sedation, ataxia, tremors, and hind limb paresis. Additional side effects include increased appetite with weight gain, increased thirst, increased urination, anorexia, vomiting, and constipation. Any signs of toxicity should be reported to the veterinarian as soon as possible.

Diazepam - Valium®

Anticonvulsant commonly used for immediate treatment of seizures, but can also be used as a sedative, muscle relaxer, and appetite stimulant. Use in cats is typically avoided due to risk of damage to the liver. Given orally or, to treat active seizures, rectally. If to be given rectally, the doctors and/or technicians will go over how to administer. Common side effects are sedation, increased appetite, ataxia, agitation, and aggression. Sedative effects can be variable amongst patients. Hepatic (liver) failure has been noted in cats.

Levetiracetam - Keppra®

Anticonvulsant medication used as a primary therapy and as an adjunctive therapy for seizures when not controlled with phenobarbital/bromides or if phenobarbital dose needs to be reduced due to liver toxicity. Side effects can include changes in behavior, gastrointestinal issues, sedation in dogs (may be transient), and reduced appetite and lethargy in cats. A routine CBC and basic metabolic blood panel should be run every 6 months while your pet is on this medication.

Phenobarbital

Barbituate primarily used for control of seizures. Often used as the primary therapy due to its relative safety, efficacy, low cost, and ability to treat seizures at sub-hypnotic doses (e.g not causing significant sedation/stupor). Possible side effects for dogs are anxiety, agitation, and/or lethargy (at start of treatment), profound depression (even at low doses), sedation, increased thirst, increased hunger, increased urination, possible increase in liver enzymes. Rare side effects include anemia (low red blood cell count), thrombocytopenia (low platelet count), and neutropenia (low neutrophil count, neutrophils are white blood cells that fight infection). In cats side effects may be ataxia, lethargy, increased appetite with weight gain, increased thirst and increased urination. Contact us or your veterinarian right away if your pet develops a serious adverse reaction (including signs of anemia and/or liver disease) or if seizure control is unacceptable.

Zonisamide

Relatively new anticonvulsant (approved in 2000 for use in humans) used as primary or adjunctive therapy with phenobarbital or potassium/sodium bromide for treatment of seizures. Usually only used as primary therapy when pet does not tolerate phenobarbital or potassium/sodium bromide. Possible side effects are sedation, ataxia, diarrhea, vomiting, and anorexia. In rare cases it can cause hyperthermia (fever), skin reactions, and blood disorders. Please contact us if the side effects become severe or progress.

Gabapentin - Neurontin®

Anticonvulsant and neuropathic pain medication. Sometimes used as adjunctive therapy for seizures though most commonly used at the VNC for treatment of neuropathic and chronic pain. Gabapentin should be used with caution in animals with kidney disease as it is eliminated via the kidneys. May be in a tablet, capsule, or liquid suspension. If using a liquid suspension of Gabapentin, make sure that it does not contain xylitol (an artificial sweetener) as xylitol can cause severe hypoglycemia potentially leading to seizures, liver failure, or death. Common side effects are sedation and ataxia.

Tramadol

Synthetic opiate used for analgesia (pain control). Possible side effects in dogs include sedation, agitation, anxiety, tremor, dizziness, lack of appetite, vomiting, constipation, and diarrhea. In cats possible side effects are dose avoidance (unpalatability), dysphoria (profound state of unease, the opposite of euphoria), and mydriasis (dilation of the pupil(s)). Tramadol, while effective for pain relief, may take up to two weeks for full pain relief in chronic pain patients.

Prednisone - Prednisolone

Prednisone or prednisolone is a corticosteroid used to treat nervous system swelling or inflammation. Some common side effects of this medication include increased thirst (and therefore increased urination), increased appetite, panting, and stomach/intestinal irritation. Please watch stool daily for evidence of blood. It can look dark and tarry or bright red. If you see a small amount and your pet is still eating – do not worry. If you see a large amount and your pet is not eating, please call. Please make sure your pet has access to adequate amounts of water and continue to feed normal amount of food. Discontinue use and contact us if your pet develops diarrhea.