



effects are nausea and diarrhea. Most dogs will tolerate at least one drug in this class of medications without these problems. We only have two products currently available for cats, so sometimes we have to substitute a different type of pain medication for the NSAIDs if necessary.

You may wonder, since we have alternatives, why we use these drugs at all. It's because nothing reduces inflammation quite as well. We can use narcotic or opioid drugs (morphine, hydrocodone, tramadol, fentanyl) for pain relief but those don't help at all with redness, swelling or wound healing. Keep in mind that all drugs can have side effects, so we would be swapping a lower risk for liver or kidney problems for higher risks for nausea, lethargy and other side effects instead, and the expense may be higher as well. Many of these alternatives are controlled substances with the potential for human abuse and strict record keeping and disposal requirements. Steroids, our other anti-inflammatory alternative, are not very good at controlling pain and have much higher risk for side effects. They are also not very safe for long term use because side effects worsen over time.

The main thing to remember is that all drugs, including NSAIDs, should be used properly according to the dosing instructions on the bottle, and safety monitoring should be done as recommended. If we are on the look-out for side effects and catch them early, no harm will come to the pet. Compared to the suffering your cat or dog would endure without pain medication, the benefits far outweigh the risk of side effects.