

White Willow Bark

What is white willow bark?

White willow bark (*salix alba*) is the source from which aspirin is extracted. It is often used as a natural substitute for aspirin in the treatment of musculoskeletal pain and inflammation, and in the prevention of blood clots.

Why recommend administration of white willow bark to my pet?

White willow bark might be recommended as a pain-reliever and anti-inflammatory agent for pets with various disorders, especially arthritis.

How much experience is there with the use of white willow bark in pets?

Herbalists have successfully used white willow bark for many years to relieve arthritic pain and inflammation in pets.

What species of animals are being treated regularly with white willow bark?

Mainly dogs are treated. The herb can be toxic to cats due to its significant content of salicylates. As with aspirin, white willow bark should be used in cats only in small amounts. Aspirin and white willow bark may be used in cats at risk for thromboemboli (clots) secondary to cardiac disease.

How much research has been conducted on this supplement?

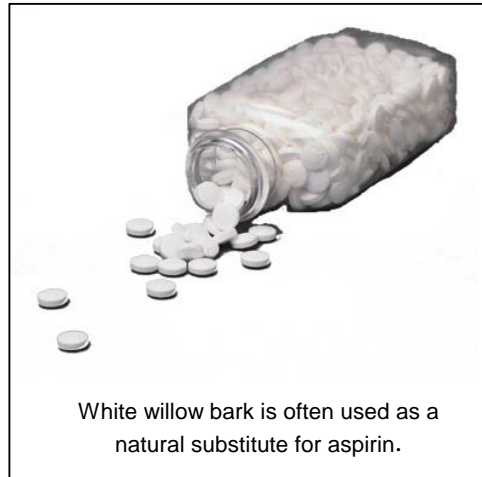
Most of the experience in dogs is based on clinical experience rather than well-conducted research. Two studies in 2000 confirmed a clinical benefit of willow bark in the relief of pain in small animals.

How safe is white willow bark?

It is safe in dogs when used as directed but poses potential toxicity when used in cats. It should only be used under veterinary supervision in pets as it could conceivably aggravate the side effects of related medications, including non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as aspirin.

Where do I obtain white willow bark and do I need a prescription?

Your veterinarian may have preferred supplements that he or she will recommend. Pet owners are cautioned against buying supplements without knowledge of the manufacturer, as supplements are not highly regulated and some supplements may not contain the labelled amount of ingredients. A prescription is not needed for white willow bark.



This client information sheet is based on material written by Steve Marsden, DVM ND MSOM LAc DipICh AHG, Shawn Messonnier, DVM and Cheryl Yuill, DVM, MSc, CVH.

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