

Lactulose

(Duphalac*, Lactugal*, Lactulose*, Laevolac*) P

- **Client Information Leaflet:** [Lactulose](#)
- **Formulations**

Oral: 3.1–3.7 g/5 ml (or 10 g/15 ml) lactulose in a syrup base. Lactugal is equivalent to 62.0–74.0% w/v of lactulose.

- **Action**

A non-absorbable sugar that is metabolized by colonic bacteria leading to the formation of low molecular weight organic acids (lactic, formic and acetic). These acids increase osmotic pressure, causing a laxative effect, and acidify colonic contents trapping ammonia as ammonium ions (which are then expelled with the faeces). Also increases the population of lactobacilli and bifidobacteria in the colon.

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- **Use**
 - Used to reduce blood ammonia in hepatic encephalopathy.
 - Treatment of constipation.

Reduce the dose if diarrhoea develops. Cats and some dogs do not like the taste of lactulose. An alternative is lactitol (β -galactosidosorbitol) as a powder to add to food (500 mg/kg/day in 3 or 4 doses, adjusted to produce 2 or 3 soft stools per day), although its efficacy in the management of hepatic encephalopathy has not been extensively evaluated.

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- **DOSES**
 - **Dogs**
 - Constipation and chronic hepatic encephalopathy: 0.5–1.0 ml/kg p.o. q8–12h. Monitor and adjust therapy to produce 2 or 3 soft stools per day.
 - Acute hepatic encephalopathy: 20 ml/kg of a solution comprising 3 parts lactulose and 7 parts warm water per rectum as a 20–30 minute retention enema. Repeat every 4–6 hours.
 - **Cats**
 - Constipation and chronic hepatic encephalopathy: 0.5–5 ml p.o. q8–12h. Monitor and adjust therapy to produce 2 or 3 soft stools per day.
 - Acute hepatic encephalopathy: 1–10 ml/kg of a solution comprising 3 parts lactulose to 7 parts warm water per rectum as a 20–30 minute retention enema. Repeat every 4–6 hours.