

ADMINISTERING MEDICATIONS TO YOUR CAT

ORAL LIQUIDS

The easiest way to give your cat liquid medication is to mix it in with some canned food. To ensure that all of the medication is ingested, it is best to give a small amount of food that the cat is certain to eat rather than a large portion that the cat may not complete. Some cats may be unwilling to eat the food or may have dietary restrictions that prevent you from using this technique. If this is the case, you will need to administer the medication directly into the cat's mouth.

Prepare an area where you can safely handle your cat. Have the medication ready and in a place where it will be easily accessible. If you are administering the medication by yourself, you may find it easiest to place your cat in your lap. It may be advisable to restrain the cat by wrapping it in a blanket or towel with only its head exposed. The first few times, it may be helpful to have someone else hold the wrapped cat while you administer the medication. Make sure you carefully read the prescription label and understand the dosing instructions. Verify that you are administering the correct drug and amount. Shake the medication gently if required prior to drawing the medication into the syringe or dropper.



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Hold the syringe or dropper containing the medication with your dominant hand. First, allow the cat to lick the medication from the tip of the syringe as you slowly depress the plunger. The cat may accept the medication more readily if it is warmed to room temperature.

If your cat is not interested in licking the liquid, gently take the cat by the scruff of the neck and pull the head back. The mouth will then open slightly.

Place the tip of the syringe in the side of the mouth, just behind one of the canine (“fang”) teeth.

Advance the syringe so it is placed in the mouth just inside of the teeth. Be sure to angle the syringe slightly to the side. You do not want to forcefully inject the liquid straight into the back of the throat. This can increase the risk of the cat inhaling or aspirating the liquid.

Slowly squeeze the syringe to dispense the liquid medication. Make sure you do this slowly so the cat has time to swallow the liquid and breathe.



Routine and Urgent Veterinary Care
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Most cats will spit out some of the medication. DO NOT re-medicate unless you are certain that NONE of the medication was taken.

Rinse the syringe out with warm water, and refrigerate if appropriate.

PILLS/CAPSULES

The easiest way to give your cat a pill is to hide the pill in food. This usually works best if the pill is hidden in a small amount of tuna, salmon or cream cheese- or you can purchase a product called "Pill Pockets" from our hospital, which is designed specifically for this. To ensure that the pill is swallowed, it is best to place the pill in a small amount of food, or a Pill Pocket, that the cat is certain to eat rather than a large portion that the cat may not complete. Some cats may spit out the pill, so it is important to monitor this activity. If your cat persists in spitting out the pills or if dietary restrictions prevent you from hiding the pills in an appealing food or treat, you will need to administer the pill directly into the cat's mouth.

Prepare a safe place to handle your cat. Have the pill ready and in a place where it will be easily accessible.

If you are administering the medication on your own, you may find it easiest to place your cat in your lap. You may need to have someone assist you in restraining your cat by wrapping it in a blanket or towel with only the head exposed.

Make sure you have carefully read the label and understand the dosing instructions.

Lubricate or "grease" the pill with a very small amount of margarine or butter so it doesn't stick in your cat's mouth or throat and will be easier to swallow. This is very helpful with the administration of capsules.

- Hold the pill between your thumb and index finger.
- Gently grasp your cat's head from above with your other hand, by placing your thumb on one side of the upper jaw and your fingers on the other. Tilt the cat's head back over its shoulder so that its nose points to the ceiling. The jaw should drop open slightly.
- With your pilling hand, use your little finger and ring finger to open the cat's mouth further by gently putting pressure on the lower lip and front teeth.





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- Quickly place the pill as far back over the tongue as possible. Try to place it on the back one-third of the tongue to stimulate an automatic swallowing reflex.
- Close the cat's mouth and hold it closed while you return the head to a normal position.
- Gently rub the cat's nose or throat, or blow lightly on the nose. This should also help stimulate swallowing.
- If you have trouble with this method of opening the mouth, try placing the cat on an elevated table. Hold the cat by the scruff of the neck and lift the front paws off of the table. The mouth will drop open. Quickly place the pill as far back on the tongue as possible, as in the previous method.
- If you continue to experience difficulty, you may want to purchase a "pet piller" device or inquire if the medication can be compounded into a liquid. Most medications can be made into liquids with appealing flavors such as tuna, chicken, or salmon.

EYE DROPS

Make sure that you wash your hands before and after administering the medication to prevent the spread of infection. Gently clean the cat's eyes with warm water and a washcloth prior to administering the eye drops.

If you are administering the medication on your own, you may find it easiest to place your cat in your lap. It may be advisable to restrain the cat by wrapping it in a blanket or towel with only its head exposed. The first few times, or if your cat's eye is painful, it may be helpful to have someone else hold the wrapped cat while you apply the drops.

Make sure you have carefully read the label and understand the instructions.

Hold the bottle using the thumb and index finger of your dominant hand with the tip pointed downwards. Be sure to keep the tip clean and do not allow it to contact the cat, the eye or any other surface. If this occurs, clean the tip by wiping it off with a clean cloth or ask your veterinarian for specific cleaning instructions.



Use the last two fingers of the same hand to pull back the upper eyelid. Place your remaining fingers under the cat's jaw to support the head. The lower eyelid will act as a pouch to receive the drops.

Hold the bottle close to the eye but ensure you DO NOT touch the eye's surface.

Squeeze the prescribed number of drops onto the eyeball, aiming for the center of the eye, and then release the head.

The cat will blink, spreading the medication over the surface of the eye.

It is normal for your cat to blink or paw at the eye after administering the drops. If this persists or if the eye appears more inflamed or red after administration of the medication, consult with your veterinarian.

EAR DROPS

Hold the cat securely in your lap. It may be advisable to restrain the cat by wrapping it in a blanket or towel with only its head exposed. The first few times, it may be helpful to have someone else hold the wrapped cat while you apply the drops.



Make sure you have carefully read the label and understand the dosing instructions and the amount of liquid you are to instill into the ear.

Draw up the liquid into the dropper, if necessary. Hold the applicator or bottle between the thumb and forefinger of your dominant hand.

Use the last two fingers of the hand holding the dropper or bottle to hold the tip of the ear.

Place your remaining hand under the cat's jaw to support the head.

Apply a small amount of medication into the ear canal. Be sure to place the tip as far into the ear canal as possible, unless the condition is confined to the outer portion of the ear.

Gently massage the base of the ear in a circular motion. Be cautious and gentle. The cat may not allow you to do this.

Release the ear and let your cat shake its head. If the medication contains a wax solvent, debris will be dissolved so it can be shaken out.

REMEMBER THAT THE EAR MAY BE VERY PAINFUL AND THAT THE CAT MAY RESPOND BY SCRATCHING OR BITING.



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TOPICAL MEDICATIONS- CREAMS, OINTMENTS, LOTIONS

Applying topical medications to your pet can sometimes be a challenge. The information provided in this handout may help make treating your pet easier – for both of you.

Creams are non-greasy. Ointments have an oily base. Lotions are liquid preparations. All are similar as far as application is concerned. Creams, ointments and lotions are for external use only. It is important to prevent your pet from licking and swallowing them. If necessary, you may need to use an Elizabethan collar to prevent this.

Be sure to follow any directions concerning application of the product, e.g. using gloves, etc. This is important since some veterinary preparations may be irritating to human skin.