



## Giving Medicine

Dogs and cats can both be a challenge at times when it comes to giving medicine. It seems like the more important the medicine is, the more they fight you! We have all struggled with our own pets so we empathize with you.

### *Pills and Capsules*



The tried and true method for pills is to open your pet's mouth, put the pill at the back of his tongue, close his mouth and rub his neck to make him swallow, being careful so you don't get bitten. In some

cases, this really does work.

On the other hand, some pets turn into a bobble-head as soon as you try it and whip their head in every direction.

You can also get a device that "shoots" the pill into your pet's mouth. The advantage of this is your pet is less likely to bite you accidentally.

### *Liquids*

Giving liquids may be easier. Put the dropper or syringe into the side of the mouth where there's a pouch between the cheek and teeth. Squirt the liquid into the pouch. It sounds easy, but, again, if your pet is moving his head a lot, it can be difficult.



You have to make sure you keep your pet's mouth closed so he doesn't spit it out. It's also easier to get a liquid medicine, more so than pills, into your pet's windpipe. **Do Not** tip his head back when you are doing this. It can be very serious if your pet inhales the medicine.

### *Step by step photos*

The veterinary school at Washington State University has some good photos of how to give pills to both dogs and cats. The cat one shows how to use a pilling device and both also show how to give liquids. If your pet is as cooperative as the ones in the pictures, it should be easy for you!

[http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/cliented/cat\\_meds.aspx](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/cliented/cat_meds.aspx)

[http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/ClientED/dog\\_meds.aspx](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/ClientED/dog_meds.aspx)

### *Hide It in Food*

There may be another way. If you are giving pills, start with the "meatball" method. Use a small amount of canned food, peanut butter, cream cheese, squeeze cheese, mini-marshmallows, small pieces of hot dog, or whatever your pet loves. Then cover a pill well with the food and offer it to your pet.

There are commercial products available such as Pill Pockets™ that are a little easier, less messy, and most pets eat them readily.

Many dogs will gulp it down. Cats are more likely to lick at their food so you can't trick them as easily. They may eat around the pill.

Sometimes you can crush the pill or open a capsule and mix the powder with soft food your pet loves. Find out from your vet if it is OK to crush a pill, as some medicines should be swallowed whole. Some medicines are bitter and mixing them as a powder doesn't work.

When your pet takes the medicine hidden in food, it's great! You've found an easy solution and everybody's happy.

### ***Ask Your Veterinarian***

If you are not having success, ask your veterinarian about a different method. Some medicines come in a flavored version that your vet may be able to give you. Your vet may have a different medicine that will work as well but tastes better or comes in a different form.

You can also talk to your vet about compounding the medicine into a form your pet will take. Certain pharmacies can compound medicines and they need a prescription.

The pharmacist may be able to make the medicine into a flavored liquid that your pet will eat or into a chewy flavored tablet. Some medicines can also be made into a gel that is applied to the inside of your pet's ears. This allows the medicine to be absorbed into the body from the skin.

### ***Summary***

Wrapping your cat in a towel may help to keep the feet under control so your cat can't keep pawing at you.

When pets need medication, it's important they take it completely. When it's long term, it's critical you find an easy method for both of you. The medicine won't help if it stays in the bottle or your pet spits it onto the floor.