

Giving medicine to your cat

Giving medicines to a cat is seldom easy! You know that it is important for the cat to complete the course as prescribed by your vet; however it can become a daily battle. This step-by-step guide aims to help you to medicate your cat in a gentle, calm and, hopefully, successful way.



Hold the cat gently – use your arms and body to keep the cat still in a small area. Holding the forelegs helps to prevent the pill from being scratched – here the front legs are being held gently between the last two fingers of each hand.



Place your thumb and forefinger on either side of the jawbone. You can hold this area very firmly without hurting the cat – this gives you control of your cat's head.

Helping the medicine go down



Some tablets can cause damage to the cat's food pipe (oesophagus) if they sit there for prolonged periods of time. To make sure that the tablet moves into the stomach quickly, syringe a small amount of water into the cat's mouth. Place the syringe gently between the cheek teeth and introduce the water slowly, giving the cat time to swallow.



Wiggly cats can be secured in a large towel.



Hold the pill between the thumb and forefinger. Tilt the jaw gently upwards using the fingers of the right hand. Once the cat's nose is pointing at the ceiling it is very difficult for him to keep his mouth clamped shut. Gently open the mouth by inserting the middle finger between the lower canines (the fangs).



Alternatively, a small knob of butter can be offered to the cat or smeared on his nose for him to lick off.



Place the cat on the towel and wrap the towel around leaving only the head exposed.



Once the mouth is open, push the pill to the back of the mouth as quickly as possible. Release the cat's head so that he can swallow with his head in a normal position.

There may be other ways a medicine can be given, eg crushed or inside a gelatine capsule. Talk to your vet about the possibilities – some medicines are very bitter and therefore crushing tablets will not help; others may be crushed and mixed with butter or tuna oil which may help cats to take them. There are pill poppers available which may help in tablet giving, some of which introduce water as well as the tablet.

Giving eye drops/ointment



Hold the cat's head tilted upwards and part the eyelids gently with the thumb and finger of one hand. Place a few drops or a line of ointment on the surface of the eye or along the lower lid. Close the eyelids and massage gently to spread the medication over the whole of the eye.

Giving ear drops



Hold the cat firmly and tilt the head so that the ear to be medicated is uppermost. Squeeze the required number of drops into the ear. Hold on to the ear flap to prevent the cat shaking its head. Massage the ear base gently.

Using spot-on preparations



Part the hair down to the skin at the back of the neck.



Apply the product onto the skin. Some preparations recommend that the product is applied at two different locations on the back of the neck, with half the tube dispensed at each.

www.fabcats.org

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The Feline Advisory Bureau (FAB)

Set up almost 50 years ago, FAB's work now provides essential information for cat owners and expert information for people working with cats such as veterinary surgeons, breeders, cattery owners and rescue centres. Through our feline expert panel (a group of veterinary surgeons funded by FAB to specialise in feline care at UK veterinary universities) FAB has gathered a wealth of information on both common and rare conditions.

We're not just interested in veterinary treatment; our experts understand that a cat's home environment and lifestyle can have a huge influence on its health and well being. FAB is interested in the whole cat! The more owners understand cats and their behaviour the better they will be at spotting problems and giving TLC when a cat needs it most.

For over 400 pages of information on cat care go to FAB's website. We're already helping over 1 million cat owners a year.

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