

How to Administer Medication to Cats

CatChannel expert Jeanne Adlon, professional cat sitter, offers tips for giving pills and medicine to cats.

By Jeanne Adlon

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Q: What is the easiest way to give pills and medicine to my cat?

A: Anyone who lives with a cat knows they are not always the best patients. Our feline companions are clever at hiding illness, and once diagnosed can be hard to persuade that any medicine, even from loving owners, will make them feel better.

Signs your cat is ill include abnormal behaviors, such as loss of appetite, bad litterbox habits or chronic hiding. If your veterinarian confirms your cat is sick and prescribes medication, there are some ways you can administer meds without starting World War III.

Pills

I use a great invention called the pill pocket to give cats pills. Several companies make pill pockets, and you should be able to find them in your local pet store. It's a small, semi-moist piece of food that has a hole in it. Place the pill in the hole, squish the hole closed, and you have a kitty meatball — and who doesn't like meatballs! You also can try crushing the pill in some baby food.

Liquid Medication

Liquid medication generally is given with an eye dropper. It's difficult to disguise, so use the direct approach, but don't make a big show out of it, if possible. Instead of wrapping your cat up in a towel for what I call the "mummy maneuver" (a kitty red alert), sit next to your cat, petting him and then insert the liquid into the side of the mouth, putting slight pressure between the teeth to open the mouth.

Remember, when your cat is sick, she can be just as miserable as the rest of us. Keep the cat as comfortable and as stress-free as possible, and make sure to finish all prescribed medicine. You will know when your cat starts to feel better. However, always follow up with your vet. I urge that all cats should have annual checkups.

Jeanne's Tip of the Week:

Always read the label on your cat's medication to determine whether it should be stored in the refrigerator. Some medications can go bad if left out and could make your cat feel worse. More tips

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