

All About Pets

The national pet care information service



HOW TO GIVE YOUR CAT MEDICINES



THE BLUE CROSS

Britain's pet charity

Tablets

Sometimes you can give medication in your cat's food.

- Pick a strong-tasting substance that will stick to a tablet or the food may be eaten and the tablet fall out. Alternatively, use something that will mix with a crushed tablet – pilchards, pate, cheese or sausage are all good choices.
- Offer the food when your pet is hungry and keep the quantity small, so that it all gets eaten

Even if the medication shouldn't really be given with food, you might still be able to do so – but check with the vet first. Tasty hollow treats (or 'tab pockets') are also available – ask at the vet or pet shop.

If hiding the tablet in food does not fool your pet you'll have to give it by hand. To make swallowing easier, it may help to coat the tablet with butter or margarine. Get everything ready where your pet can't see it; otherwise your cat may hide.



To give a tablet by hand

- Ask someone to hold your cat's front legs steady, or try wrapping your pet in a blanket



- Position your left hand (if you are right handed) on top of your cat's head with your thumb on one side and your fingers on the other side of its cheeks
- Tilt the head back so that the nose points at the ceiling and the mouth should then open



- Hold the tablet between the thumb and first finger of your other hand. Use the other fingers on this hand to press on the front of the lower jaw between the canine teeth to open the mouth further. Then pop the pill onto the tongue as far back as you can get it.
- Close the mouth and hold it closed until you have seen the cat swallow. Stroke the throat or rub the nose to try to stimulate swallowing. If in doubt, open the mouth and look.
- Offer a tasty morsel. This will help take away the memory of the experience.



You can also get pill 'poppers' or guns – long thin tubes with a plunger, which you put into the mouth. Pushing the plunger administers the pill.

To give liquid medicines

- Draw up the medicine into a dropper or syringe. Tilt the head back as described previously
- Place the syringe or dropper into the side of the mouth behind the canines (the big fangs). Administer the liquid slowly, allowing your pet time to swallow.
- Be prepared for some of the medicine to dribble out – a second person can hold paper towels below the jaw – or for your pet to struggle and ‘froth’ at the mouth. Give your cat something to take the taste away afterwards.

To administer eye drops or ointment



- Have the drops or ointment ready with the lid off. Ask someone to hold your cat's front legs, if possible, or wrap your pet in a blanket. Place your left hand (if you are right handed) under the chin to hold the head steady.
- Use your right hand to hold the bottle or tube. Rest this hand on the top of the head and pull up on the upper eyelid to part the lids (you will need to be firm as the eyelids are quite strong). Alternatively, if you have someone to help you, use your thumb on the lower lid and your first finger on the upper to hold the lids apart.
- If you are putting in drops then put the number of drops prescribed by the vet right into the eye, being careful not to touch the eye itself.
- If you are applying ointment squeeze a little out of the nozzle to start with, position this over the eye and squeeze again to lay a trail of ointment over the actual surface of the eye. Be careful not to touch the eye with the nozzle.
- Don't let your pet rub the eye. Give a treat!

Ear medication

The ear flap is only part of your cat's ear. The hearing apparatus is inside the head, at the end of an L-shaped tube (the 'ear canal') which connects it to the outside. This tube starts at the base of the flap where it attaches to the head, runs vertically down the side of the head, and then turns sharply inwards.

How to clean the ears or apply medication

- Warm the medication slightly first and have it (and cotton wool or tissue) ready – with the lid off
- Ask someone to help hold your cat's front legs or wrap your pet in a blanket



- Hold the ear flap with your left hand if you are right handed and look for the ear opening

- With your right hand put the number of drops prescribed by the vet into this opening, put down the bottle but keep hold of the flap

- Feel for the tube running down the side of the head and use your finger and thumb to gently massage the medication down the tube. Wipe away any wax or excess medication that emerges.

- Release the ear flap – your pet will shake its head. Give a reward.





Further information

For further information and advice on caring for your pet or horse visit www.allaboutpets.org.uk, the national pet care information service. Alternatively, you can write to us at the address below to request a list of available leaflets.

All About Pets is provided by The Blue Cross, Britain's pet charity. We rely entirely on your support to enable us to continue our vital work. Any contribution would be most welcome. Thank you.



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