

GIVING YOUR CAT MEDICATION

Your veterinarian has prescribed pills for your cat and it's your job to see that your cat takes them. What now? Here's how to get the job done without turning your cat into a hissing, spitting pill-hating nightmare:

- First, trying hiding the pill in food such as tuna, peanut butter or cream cheese – provided that your veterinarian has said that the medication can be given with food. But watch to be sure that your cat actually takes the pill. Some cats will eat the food and spit out the medicine.
 - If hiding the pill in food doesn't work, you are going to have to administer it physically. Unless you have a wonderfully accommodating cat, start by having a friend hold your cat's front legs and chest to keep her still. You can also try wrapping her snugly in a blanket or towel.
 - Firmly grasp your cat's head. If you are right-handed use your left hand; if you are a lefty, use your right hand. Put your thumb on one side of your cat's face and your fingers on the other. Avoid holding the lower jaw and make sure you don't squeeze the throat. Otherwise, you'll choke the cat.
 - Once your cat's head is held in place, raise her nose to point toward the ceiling. Her mouth should start to open.
 - Place the pill between the thumb and forefingers of your other hand. Use your little finger, ring finger or middle finger to open your cat's mouth further by applying pressure on her lower front teeth.
 - After the mouth is fully open, place the pill as far back in the mouth as possible. Avoid placing your hand too far into your cat's mouth or she might gag. If this happens she may spit the pill back out.
 - Close your cat's mouth and hold it closed. Gently and briefly rub your cat's nose, or blow on it. This should stimulate her to lick her nose, causing her to swallow. You can also try to stimulate swallowing by rubbing your cat's throat. If none of that works, tilt your cat's head back a little and try again.
 - Always remember to praise your cat and maybe give her a treat. This will make future medicine times less traumatic.
- Final tip, if your vet approves, it may be a good idea to try this process after your cat has eaten. She may well be calmer and more receptive then.