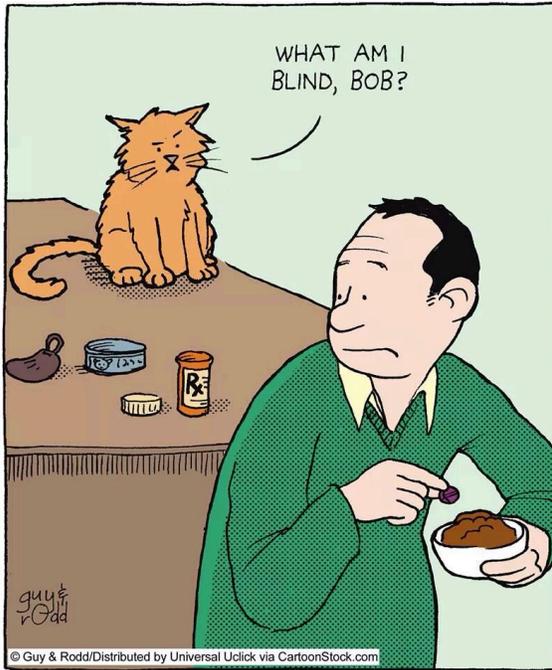


Medicating Your Pet



Hiding the Pill

Oftentimes, medicating your dog or cat is not as easy as putting the tablet, pill, powder, or liquid into something yummy. Always check with your veterinarian before sneaking your pet's medication into food, as some medications are meant to be given on an empty stomach, and hiding in food may reduce efficacy and absorption. As long as food gets a green light, it is important to be smart with your hiding to avoid teaching your pet to eat around the medication or only part of the food.

Crushing the tablet into wet/canned food

Make sure to do so into the smallest amount of food possible. This will allow you to monitor that your pet has consumed the entire quantity, thereby ensuring a full dose. Once the pet has eaten the entire portion of food with the medication, you can then present the rest of the meal. Keep in mind, some pets, especially cats, can taste medication in food, so be prepared to deal with a lost dosage when trying this method. You can call your veterinarian for additional tablets/capsules if this method fails.

Hiding the entire tablet or capsule inside a treat

Make sure to use a treat that is pliable and a favorite of your pet's. Covering the tablet or capsule with too much treat will provide more surface area for the pet to chew on and thereby create more opportunity for them to bite down and taste the medication. For this reason, make sure to only lightly coat the medication with the treat, but enough to fully hide it. When presenting the treat-covered medication, remember to use the 5 treat approach. Start with a blank (just treat), give another blank, give the treat with the medication, and follow up quickly with 2 more blanks. Starting with just the treat and doing this fast will provide minimal opportunity to chew and taste the medication. If you just give the medicated treat and the pet tastes the medication and eats around it/spits it out, this will train the pet to be wary of future treats. Starting with blanks will help avoid this learned behavior.

Pilling Your Pet

If your pet is too smart to be fooled by food, you may have to pill your pet with your hand or a pill "gun". Before using this method, please inquire with your veterinarian if this method is appropriate. Some medications can cause tracheal irritation in cats, for example. Furthermore, as a more hands-on method, this can pose more risk of injury for the handler and pet. If this method seems to be causing high stress in your pet, please stop and contact your veterinarian for advice.



Using your hand: If your pet (especially a cat) is very tactile and uses their paws in protest,

it may help to wrap them in a towel, covering their front legs. Placing the pet on an elevated surface may help with handling and prevent a feeling of being cornered while still reducing the risk of escape. Hold the pill between your thumb and index finger in your dominant hand. With your non-dominant hand, gently grasp your pet's head from above, placing your thumb on one side of the upper jaw and your fingers on the other. Tilt your pet's head back over its shoulder so that its nose points to the ceiling. This will cause the jaw to open slightly. With your pilling hand, use gentle pressure on the lower lip and front teeth with your little finger and ring finger to further open the pet's mouth. Quickly place the pill as far back over the tongue as possible. By placing it in the back 1/3rd of the tongue, this will help to stimulate the automatic swallowing reflex. Close the pet's mouth, returning the head to a normal position, and gently rub their nose and/or throat, which will help stimulate swallowing. Squirtting a little water

from a syringe into the pet's mouth afterwards can help facilitate swallowing. In cats, the licking of their nose indicates that the pill has been swallowed. Following every pilling with positive reinforcement, such as a treat, pets, praise, or play, is important to prevent teaching the pet to avoid future encounters or escalating in a negative reaction.



Pet piller: If you are unsuccessful with or want to avoid using your hands for pilling, we recommend investing in a "pet piller" or "pill gun". This allows you to use a long wand with a plunger instead of your fingers to get the pill far back into the back of the pet's mouth. Using one hand to open the mouth and tilt the head back can help with this method. However, you can also prod around the side of the patient's mouth with the piller until they open their mouth. Then, quickly position the plunger as far back in the mouth as possible before releasing the pill. Wrapping the patient with a towel, positioning the patient atop an elevated surface, and chasing the pill with water from a syringe can help in this process.



Compounded medication

If you are unable to dose your pet's medication in "pill" form, having a compounded version of it may be the solution. A compounded medication is a medication that has been reconstituted by a compounding pharmacy into a chewable flavored (treat-like) tablet, flavored liquid, or transdermal salve (to apply onto the inner ear pinna). Please note that not all medications can be compounded, given that their absorption capability and therefore efficacy can be drastically reduced with this method. Furthermore, compounded medications have a shorter shelf life; therefore need to be ordered on an individual basis when prescribed. This results in a 1-2 week manufacturing and shipping period. For long-term medications and uncooperative patients, this may be the best or only option.

Scheduling Veterinary At-Home Visits for Dosing

For short-term dosing of uncooperative pets, it may be ideal to schedule veterinary visits or to hire trained staff/pet sitters for at-home visits. Pets are generally confident in their home and around their caretakers and therefore it may be a lot harder for a pet parent to medicate their pet rather than a trained professional. Although this can get pricey, for important short-term medications that need to be dosed promptly, this may be the best option.