

ACCES for Pet Health

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How do I Give my Pet's Medication?

By Dr. Beth Davidow, DVM DACVECC



Giving your pet medication doesn't have to be difficult. Photo courtesy of [Animal Hospital of Antioch](#).

One of the biggest problems with successfully treating our animal patients is making sure that owners can actually get the medications into them. Cats in particular can be very difficult to medicate. I hope to give you some hints and suggestions that may make this tough job go better.

The majority of dogs will take most medications in food. If your pet does not have dietary restrictions, I find that peanut butter or cream cheese, because they are sticky, are often a good way to hide medications.

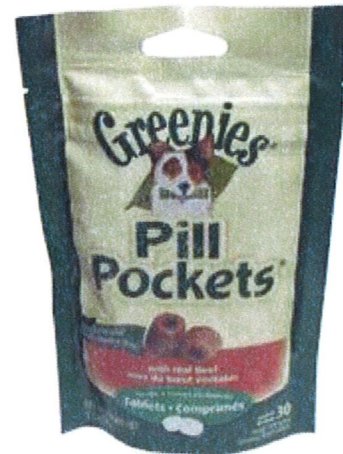
Many veterinarians also sell what are called Pill Pockets, a treat that you can pull apart and hide a medication inside. If your pet has a food allergy, please discuss what foods are OK to try with your primary veterinarian.

If your pet will not take the medication with food, you will need to "pill" them. The following website has an excellent description of ways to do this: <http://www.petalert.com.au/faid/faa2.php>

Cats are trickier. Many will not eat pill pockets and they are often quite adept at licking food off around a pill and spitting the pill out. This link goes to a website that has a great video section on how to give medications to your cat: http://partnersah.vet.cornell.edu/pet/fhc/pill_or_capsule

If you haven't given your pet medication before, please ask the veterinarian or veterinary assistant to give the first dose for you and to demonstrate. This is often the most helpful way to learn.

It also really helpful to make a calendar or checklist that you can mark when you give the medication so that you have a visual reminder about whether the medication was given or not. This is especially helpful if multiple people in the household are medicating the pet or if you are giving more than one medication.



Pill Pockets are an easy and inexpensive way to give your pets a pill. You can find them in most pet stores, and some veterinary offices.

If you are having problems, always feel free to call your veterinarian for advice and assistance.

Posted by **Christina Ryan** at December 4, 2008 12:00 a.m.

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