

# How to Give a Cat a Pill

Giving a cat a pill can be a challenge! Cats are notorious for spitting out pills, or struggling enough to result in both injury to the guardian and increased stress for kitty. Here are some tips to get your feline friend to accept a pill more willingly.

1. Start by asking your veterinarian for a demonstration on giving pills using safe, stress-free handling that will make the process tolerable for your cat. Learn your cat's body language, signs of stress, and when it's time to stop. Practice these techniques and be sure to reward your cat for being a good sport about it.
2. Your veterinarian can tell you if the drug can be given with food, and what types are okay given your cat's health condition. You'll want to try various types of treats. Obviously some foods are healthier than others, so start with healthy stuff and keep trying!

Here is a suggested list:

- Meat flavored baby food
- Lean turkey, chicken, or cold cuts
- Canned cat food - something your kitty doesn't usually eat.
- Cheese - cream cheese or cheddar cheese
- Canned tuna
- Butter



3. Have pre-cut portions of your treat ready and the pill prepped to administer. To mask the scent of a pill, use one hand to hide the pill inside the treat, and your other hand to seal it closed. This way there is no trace of medication on the outside of the treat.
4. Use the 3-P approach! Promise something good - offer treats without a pill. Pill your cat. Positively reinforce with treats, play, petting or a meal afterward! Cats are smart, and some will figure out your 3-P pattern. If this happens, try giving a random number of treats and mix up the order of the pill.
5. Keep treat portions small or soft enough that your cat doesn't need to chew. Chewing can be problematic with certain drugs, and will undoubtedly be distasteful to the discerning feline palate.
6. You may need to use a syringe or pill gun to deliver the medicine. To accustom your cat to the apparatus near his face, use small pieces of meat in the pill gun, or tuna juice in the syringe. Allow your kitty to lick and get used to the object.
7. Finally, be patient and keep trying. If you're ready to throw in the towel, don't give up! Talk to your veterinarian. There may be other options for crushing the pill, making a liquid or using a transdermal patch. By working with your clinic, your kitty will get the medications he needs to live a long and healthy life!

## The 3-P Approach

- 1: Promise: Give a treat without the pill first.
2. Pill: Give the pill inside a treat.
3. Positively Reinforce: Give another treat (or two)!