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How to Give Your Cat a Pill

This is Sammie, our model for today. He has volunteered to take an amoxicillin tablet for our demonstration. Our technician Mo will be assisting.



These directions are for a right-handed person. The cat will want to back away from the pill, so hold him in the crook of your right elbow so that he has no where to go. The pill is held in your left hand.



With your right hand, take the cat by the cheeks and lift his nose to the ceiling. His mouth will automatically drop slightly open.



Use a finger of your left hand to open his lower jaw wider.



He has no strength in the lower jaw in this position and cannot bite.



Place the pill as far back as possible into the mouth.



Let go of the cat's face and watch for lip licking motions that usually indicate the pill has been swallowed. Some cats are good at deception so it is a good idea to open the mouth after a moment to see if the pill has been swallowed. If possible, squirt a small amount of water into the cat's mouth to promote swallowing. This helps nudge the pill all the way into the stomach where it belongs. Some medicines lodge in the esophagus temporarily and can cause irritation there if the medicine's pH is in an unfriendly range.

Mistakes to avoid:

- Do not try to approach the cat from the front. He will back away from you and escape. Your body should be behind the cat, with you and your cat facing the same direction.

- Do not try to give the pill with the cat's head in a natural position. You will be bitten. You must hold the cat's head vertically in order to be successful.

Don't forget to check the cat's mouth before releasing him. Many cats know you are waiting to see the licking motions and will try to fool you. If the pill is still in the mouth when you check, just reach a finger in and tip the pill further back on the tongue or allow the cat to spit the pill out and begin again.

My cat just won't take a pill! What can I do?

Some cats will just not take a pill, regardless of how well you follow these directions. If this is the case with your cat, you may want to investigate an alternative method of providing your cat with the medicine they need.

[Compounding pharmacies](#) can take medications normally only available in pill form and create alternative methods of providing that medication, such as in liquid or capsule form or in chewable tablets flavored with fish or chicken.

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