



# Feline Forum

Courtesy of:

## Take Your Medicine

If you don't know how, giving a cat medication can be a bit like trying to grab a greased pig. Your veterinarian will be happy to show you how to give any medication prescribed, so make sure to ask for a hands-on demonstration before leaving the clinic. Here are a few basic tips.

It's best if there are two people available — one to hold the cat and one to administer the medicine. If the patient begins to struggle, the holder can stabilize the front legs, protecting the doser from sharp claws.

### Giving pills

- Kneel on the floor and sit the cat down facing away from you with its back and rump close to you.
- Grip the cat's upper jaw behind the fangs, pulling the upper jaw toward you so that the cat is looking at the ceiling. You may need to use a little pressure to open the lower jaw, but if the animal is looking at the ceiling, the lower jaw drops open. Place the heel of the hand that's gripping the upper

jaw on the cat's "forehead." With the other hand, drop the tablet on top of the tongue as far back as you can without forcing it down.

- Close the cat's mouth and stroke the throat a few times. When the cat licks its lips, you know the pill has gone down.

### Giving liquids

- You don't want the cat to point its head at the ceiling in this case, because you might send the liquid down the wrong tube.
- Instead, with the cat facing away from you, lift the corner of the mouth and try to get the dropper or syringe between the teeth.

### Other considerations

Since many medications taste bitter and cats have a keen sense of smell, crumbling a tablet on cat food may not work. Try to hide it in food, like tiny meatballs and leave it for the cat.

For dosing a kitten, try scruffing — seizing it by the back of the neck like its mother would — to calm it down. Even with scruffing, it's best to have another person on hand to assist.

## What to Look For in a Cat Carrier

- Your cat should be able to stand and turn around in any carrier you select.
- Use a carrier with food and water holders on long trips by plane or car.
- Make sure there are no sharp, protruding pieces that might injure the cat.
- Portability is important. You should be able to hold the carrier in one hand.
- If you're flying, try to keep your cat in a carrier under your seat. Particularly on shorter flights, it may be worth sacrificing total kitty comfort by having kitty with you, even in a snug carrier.

## Toxoplasmosis and Pregnancy

The infectious disease of most concern to pregnant women is toxoplasmosis, which results from infection with the microscopic parasite, *Toxoplasma gondii*. There are several simple guidelines you can follow that will dramatically reduce the chances of exposure to toxoplasma:

### Don't...

- change the cat litter
- put cat litter in compost
- introduce a new kitten into the home
- eat undercooked (rare) or raw meat, especially lamb or pork
- eat or drink unpasteurized dairy products

### Do...

- protect your cats from infection by keeping them indoors (and don't feed them raw meat or unpasteurized dairy products)
- wear rubber gloves when gardening, and if you must change the litter
- wash raw vegetables thoroughly before eating
- wash your hands after handling raw meat
- cover children's sandboxes
- scoop out the litterbox every day; it is preferable to have someone else do it for you.

The information for *Feline Forum* has been prepared by the Cornell Feline Health Center, Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, Ithaca, NY. Copyright 2001



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