



Medicating Your Cat

by Nedda Wittels

With assistance from my cats
Violet and Sakhara.

Your Attitude and Understanding Matter

Teaching your cat to take pills and liquid medications can help save your cat's life and make the whole process easier for both of you.

My cats, Violet and Sakhara, taught me about giving pills and medicine to them. Now, we would like to share our system with you. We developed it together and it works well for us. We hope it will smooth out this processes for you and your feline friends.

Please remember that you and your cat are **LEARNING** to do this together. It requires patience on both your parts to make this a pleasant process. By working as a team, you and your cat can come to a mutual understanding and can create a medicine-taking process that is comfortable and successful for both of you.

Since you are learning something new, *the GOAL is to LEARN*, rather than to get all the medicine into the cat. Unfortunately, most people discover that they don't know how to give medicine to cats only when their cat is sick and it is imperative that the cat consume all the medicine. Nevertheless, taking the time to teach yourself and your cat how to do this will ultimately benefit you both.

If you have a young kitten, start now to give him 2-3 drops of water from time to time (no more than once a week) using a dropper. This gets him used to the idea of receiving something in a dropper. Follow the instructions here and you will build confidence between your kitten and yourself around this.

If you have an adult cat who does not need medication, you can also begin in the same way – with just plain water. What can make an older cat more of a challenge is that she may have previously had a negative experience around this activity. That's fine. You can address this, too, as you practice using a dropped with plain water. If nothing else, the fact that it's just water and not some odd tasting medicine will help you build the relationship that you're seeking – to make it easy to give your cat medication.



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Long Term Goals

SUCCESS IS HOW YOU DEFINE IT

Remember, you and your cat are both learning. Learning takes time and patience and commitment.

In the beginning, it's important to get your animal to be calm and relaxed, even if you don't get all the medication into the cat.

If you succeed in being calm yourself and in helping your cat become calm, you'll quickly be getting all the medication into your cat.

If you don't succeed, it may soon become impossible to medicate your cat, and ultimately, that is your goal, right?

YOUR GOALS FOR YOU

- To learn your cat's comfortable rhythm for taking pills and liquid medicine.
- To learn how to give pills and liquid medicine to your cat

YOUR GOALS FOR YOUR CAT

- To teach your cat to be relaxed, unafraid, and cooperative while taking pills and liquid medicine.
- To be able to give meds on a daily basis (or several times each day) without a struggle.
- To have a cat who easily takes all of her medicine every day.



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Things to Do and Things to Avoid

DO THESE THINGS EACH AND EVERY TIME.

- *ALWAYS END THE SESSION ON A GOOD NOTE* with you and your cat feeling pleasure and success.
- *PRAISE AND THANK YOUR CAT* for cooperating.
- *PET YOUR CAT* in a favored spot on his/her body.
- *PUT YOUR CAT GENTLY ON THE FLOOR* if the cat was in your lap.
- *RELEASE YOUR CAT GENTLY* if you and the cat were already on the floor.

AVOID THESE THINGS EACH AND EVERY TIME.

- Do not allow your cat to jump down and run away. **You decide** when the session is finished and you let your cat know by thanking him and placing him on the floor.
- If your cat gets away in the middle of the medication session, **DO NOT CHASE HER**. Wait for at least an hour before you try again.
- Do not make the session so long that the cat loses patience and becomes restless and fearful.



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Preparing for the Medication Session

Read through this section several times until you understand how to prepare yourself and your cat.

ITEMS NEEDED FOR EACH SESSION.

Have everything in this list ready to go before you collect your cat to begin the session. *PATIENCE*. Pick a time when you are UNRUSHED.

- *FLOWER ESSENCES*. Bach *Rescue Remedy* or *FES 5-Flower Formula*, a cup, and a tissue in which to stand the bottle of flower essences.
- *THE MEDICATIONS* prescribed for your cats in their original bottles.
- *CLEAN DROPPER* from a 1 ounce dropper bottle.
- *LID* from an old pill bottle to hold pills or a small bowl.
- *SMALL DISH OF WARM WATER* for wetting pills to make them easier to swallow.
- *SMALL CUP* (When giving liquid remedies, you can put the measured amount of liquid into this cup so you won't contaminate the dropper from the original bottle.)
- *A BATH SIZE TOWEL* for wrapping the cat. (See discussion on page 8.)

CUT YOUR OWN NAILS

To give a cat pills, the nails on the fingers of your pill-giving (dominant) hand must be cut short enough to prevent you from stabbing your cat in the mouth with them. Short nails make it easier for you to hold onto tiny pills and to aim them properly.

PUT YOURSELF INTO A CALM, RELAXED STATE

- Put 3-4 drops of *Rescue Remedy* under your tongue. Take as much as you need to become relaxed before you start. Your emotional state will affect how the cat reacts.



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- Take 3 deep breaths. Exhale out through your feet, as this will help you be grounded.
- Open your heart center.

HAVE ALL THE ITEMS READY AND LOCATED WHERE YOU CAN EASILY REACH THEM.

Decide whether you'll work in a chair or on the floor. Put all these items in place where you can easily reach them, and where they cannot be easily knocked over.

- **Rescue Remedy:** Place the Rescue Remedy bottle in a cup with the top unscrewed and a tissue scrunched up around the bottom of the bottle so it won't tip over and spill. This also makes it easy for you to refill the dropper with more of this liquid so you can use as much as you need.
- **Pills:** Place pills into a lid or a small bowl so you don't have to wrestle with the pill bottles while you hold the cat.
- **Liquid Homeopathic Remedies:** Put the drops you plan to give into the empty cup.
- **Other Liquid Meds:** Have the tops unscrewed and/or measure out the amount you need to give by filling the droppers appropriately. If you need to, you can use additional cups for each one.
- **Plain Water:** Always have some plain water available in a cup. You can use this to eliminate "Yukky" tastes of herbal or medical liquids.

You might also have handy a small clean towel and some tissues.

NOTE: When first giving liquid, I found it easier to have the cat in my lap. When first giving pills, I found it easier to kneel on the floor and have the cat backed up against my knees. It's ok to change positions as you need to. Just make sure you have everything set up the way you want to work so that once you have your cat, you can get right into the practice session.



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Catching and Preparing Your Cat

THINK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE AS YOU GO PICK UP YOUR CAT.

Cats are telepathic and know when you are about to do something they don't like.

ALWAYS think about something else - anything else, to prevent your cat knowing your true intentions when you go to pick your cat up to have a lesson. Later on, you can tell your cat, "Time for pills (meds)" if you know that your cat will agree to this, but not during this desensitization process.

NEVER chase your cat to catch her in order to begin the practice session. Find another way to get your cat. If you have to chase the cat to catch it, you are already starting out with you and the cat upset, which is the opposite of your goal. Why make your job harder right at the start?

So if you happen to think about "pills" or "medicine" and your cat decides "No way today" and leaves the room, **stop**. Leave everything where it is for 20 minutes and go do something else. Then start again to get your cat while thinking about something else!

What to think about? Pink striped elephants dancing in the air. Daffodils blooming in the spring. The taste and aroma of fish or chicken. Something you love that makes you happy.

Sometimes I get everything ready and just sit quietly and wait until the cat jumps into my lap to be petted. I may read or watch a video to focus my mind elsewhere. Once the cat jumps into my lap, the session begins. NOTE: This won't work if the medicine has to be given before food is consumed, as your cat may be unwilling to get into your lap at feeding time. However, it WILL work just fine for practice sessions.



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WITH YOUR CAT IN YOUR LAP, DO AND SAY THE FOLLOWING.

Gently stroke your cat in a way that s/he likes to be petted, as you say these things:

- “I love you and want you to be well.”
- “Please help me learn how to give you medicine in a way that’s comfortable for you.”
- “I want to learn how to give you the medicine you need to get well.”
- “I love you. Your health and well-being are important to me.”
- “You and I are learning how to do this together, and I may not do it perfectly at first.”
- “Please be patient with me and cooperate as best you can so I can learn how to do this in a way that’s comfortable and easy for you.”

USE RESCUE REMEDY LAVISHLY

You can repeat these steps with the Rescue Remedy (RR) as many times as you need to until you feel that you and the cat are relaxed. You can’t overdose this.

1. Wrap one arm around your cat (your less dominant arm is best) and hold that hand open palm upwards.
2. Place 4 or more drops from the Rescue Remedy (RR) bottle into your palm. Put the dropper back into the bottle.
3. Dip the fingers on your dominant hand into the RR in your palm.
4. Put RR on your cat’s nose pad and lips, on its paw pads, and on its ear tips.
 - a. Pet and praise your cat. Tell her how gorgeous she is.
 - b. Open your heart center.
5. Put RR on your hands as if it were a hand lotion.
 - a. Let your cat sniff your hands.
 - b. Pet and praise her.
 - c. Take a deep breath, exhale through your feet, and tell yourself, “Relax.”
6. Put more RR on your cat. Pet and praise her.

Repeat steps 4 through 6 until you and your cat are both relaxed. You can’t overdose Rescue Remedy.



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THE BEST POSITION FOR GIVING LIQUIDS.

This position will work very well with giving liquid medication in the side of the cat's mouth, which is where you want to give it. It will not work well for giving pills.

However, once the cat is comfortable being in your arms this way and fully trusts it, you can begin to shift them so they lie on their back with their side against you, and start teaching about pill taking.

- Sit in a chair or on the floor with your back fully supported.
- Hold the cat in your lap with its back towards your chest and pet the cat.
- Gentle and slowly, stroke the cat and encourage him to rest his back against your chest. You may have to lean a bit forward at first to make contact. You're not asking the cat to lie on his back, as many cats don't feel safe doing that. You're asking him to be vertical while feeling his back against your chest right in your heart center.
- Open your heart center using intention.
- Stroke your cat gently, giving him lots of encouragement. Don't start touching the belly if your cat doesn't usually like it touched. Stroke the head and neck of the animal instead. When he accepts this, you gently touch the belly if that feels good to your cat. Letting you touch their belly is a sign of great trust.
- If this position scares your cat at first, practice it several times a day without doing anything else about medications.
- When he finds this position normal and natural as a way to receive petting and love, then you are ready to use this position for giving liquid medication.



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USING A TOWEL OR SPECIAL “SACK” TO CONFINE THE CAT.

You can use a towel to help your cat accept medication except in these circumstances:

- If the towel panics your cat (this type of confinement might have been used at the vet or by someone else to forcibly give medications).
- If you find it awkward to wrap your cat in a towel and hold the cat still.

Wrapped in a towel, the cat's paws can't interfere with your hand when you give the medicine. However, some cats go completely limp and slither backwards out of the towel and get away. I recommend you try out a towel around your cat to see how your cat reacts before actually using one when you want to give meds.

There are also “sacks” you can buy to immobilize your cat, but I’ve never used one. Since the goal here is to help you cat accept medication and for you to learn how to give it, that approach feels inappropriate to me. Still, if the cat is seriously ill when you begin giving medications, you may need to use the “sack” or have another person help you immobilize the cat in the beginning.

To use a towel,

- Hold your cat in your lap or kneel on the floor.
- Place the cat wrapped in a towel with its back resting against your thighs.
- In the floor position, the cat cannot back away as you try to medicate her because she'll be backing up into your legs.
- If your cat's back is against your thighs, it's harder to see what you're doing when giving pills, as you are behind the cat.



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Giving Liquid Medication

SOME SIMPLE RULES FOR USING A DROPPER OR SYRINGE

AVOID CHOKING or THE SENSATION OF CHOKING. Putting liquid directly into the front of a cat's mouth or trying to put it down their throat can cause choking because the cat might inhale the liquid. This causes cats to resist taking medication.

Therefore:

- ALWAYS put the liquid into the side of the cat's mouth and directly onto the tongue.
- Cats have tiny tongues and can only handle a few drops of liquid at a time.
- GIVE ONLY 1 OR 2 DROPS of liquid AT A TIME, not the full dropper.

You can give a large cat with a larger tongue a drop or two more. Let your cat tell you how much is too much. Observe the cat's reaction. Fewer drops is better than a choking cat who may become terrified because it has inhaled the liquid.

CATS NEED TIME TO BREATHE between doses. They cannot breathe and swallow at the same time. They also like to lick their lips a bit. If you give too much too soon, your cat can't breathe and that scares your cat. Remember, your goal is a calm, relaxed cat willing to take medication. Follow these steps.

1. GIVE JUST A FEW DROPS ON THE SIDE OF THE TONGUE,. Your cat will swallow them.
2. Then give your cat a chance to breathe.
3. Meanwhile, YOU TAKE 2 FULL BREATHS YOURSELF AND TELL YOURSELF TO RELAX as you WATCH WHAT YOUR CAT DOES.
4. Notice her breathing and even licking her lips. When she has done this, she is ready for the next 2 or 3 drops.. Go back to step 1 and repeat all 4 steps.



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ELIMINATING “YUKKY” TASTE.

If your cat doesn't like the taste of the medication, give a few drops of plain water with a dropper between each set of drops to wash away the taste.

Your cat will appreciate this.

Your cat will also relax because the “yucky” taste is gone. This helps you end the session on a good note.



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Giving Pills

This system is for all pills EXCEPT homeopathics caplets. Those must go into the side of the mouth or you can dissolve them in a tiny amount of lukewarm water (about 8 drops) and then give the liquid with a dropper.

CATS CANNOT SWALLOW A PILL WHEN YOU HOLD THEIR MOUTHS CLOSED OR WHEN YOU HOLD THEIR HEADS BACK.

Have ready the following items within easy reach.

- All the pills you plan to give either in a jar lid or on a saucer.
- A small bowl of warm water.
- An eye dropper.
- A flat plate on which there is a small amount of room temperature unsalted butter.
- A towel to wrap around the cat (see page 9 about using towels).

NOTE: These instructions are for people who are right handed.
Please make appropriate changes if you are left handed.

- **KNEEL** on the floor with your knees slightly apart, your feet together, and your seat on your heels. This is the easiest position in which to give a pill.
- **PLACE THE BACK OF THE CAT AGAINST YOUR LEGS** so it can't back away. You can also wrap the cat in a towel and place the cat in this position.
- With your non-dominant hand, palm down, **GENTLY GRASP THE CAT'S CHEEKBONES** from above and tilt the head very slightly back.
- **HOLD THE PILL** between you index finger and thumb of your dominant hand.
- **MAKE THE PILL SLIPPERY:** Dip the pill into the warm water to wet it thoroughly OR roll the pill in some unsalted butter. This makes it easier to slid down the cat's throat.)



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- Open your cat's mouth.
 - With your pill-giving hand palm up, use the back of the nail of the middle finger of the pill-giving hand to pry the lower jaw down.
 - Insert the fingernail between the cat's teeth.
- With the thumb and index finger, "**SHOOT**" **THE PILL INTO THE BACK OF THE THROAT** – beyond the hump in the tongue.
- **LET GO OF THE CAT'S MOUTH SUDDENLY** so the cat will swallow with surprise.
 - Because you have made the pill slippery, it will probably slide right down your cat's throat.
 - If your aim is off and the pill gets stuck between the cat's side teeth, allow your cat to spit out the pill. Apologize for your inaccurate aim.
 - Ask your cat to bear with you as you try again.
 - **Take some deep breaths and open your heart center. Begin again.**
 - If your cat tries to catch the pill and spits it out, take some deep breaths, and then start again.

AIMING THE PILL: One of my cats has an opening to her throat that is more to one side than to the other. It took me a while to figure this out. Once I did, my aim improved.

- **AFTER THE PILL IS SWALLOWED**, follow up with some additional drops of water from a dropper given on the tongue through the side of the mouth.
- If you are giving several pills, the additional water helps the pill you just gave slide down the esophagus and wets the throat for the next pill.

Cats cannot breathe when they are swallowing. When giving several pills, take brief breaks between each pill to allow your cat to catch her breath and to lick her lips. Stroke your cat to help her stay relaxed. If necessary, use more Rescue Remedy on your cat.



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Finishing Your Session

YOU ARE IN CHARGE OF ENDING THE SESSION. THEREFORE ...

PRAISE your cat.

THANK your cat for cooperating.

PET your cat in some favored spot.

RELEASE your cat.

You must actively release your cat; put the cat on the floor;
let the cat go so the cat knows it ok to leave.