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Tips for Giving Pills to Your Pet

Some tried-and-true methods that help the meds get where they need to be - inside your pet!

- Lunchmeat in all varieties is a classic option. Wrap the pill in salami, ham, bologna, or American cheese and many an unsuspecting dog will wolf it down. For dogs, the grosser and stinkier the better, so liverwurst may be one thing that an inappetent dog will eat.
- You can also try other common options such as hot dogs, bread, meatballs or a canned diet.
- Cheese in a can might work wonders.
- Peanut butter and butter are tasty and have the advantage of lubricating the pill. It's can be a bit tricky if the dog spits it out and you need to give it again when it's slippery.
- A 'pilling gun' has a rubber end that holds the pill and a plunger to deliver the pill to the back of the throat. This way, your hands stay clear of teeth and you have a better chance of getting the pill in the sweet spot where swallowing is easier than spitting it out.
- Sometimes we can order medications from a compounding pharmacy. The medication can be flavored with such enticing flavors such as tuna, chicken, and beef. There are even a few medications we can order in a formula that can be applied topically on the ears of cats. It sometimes can take a couple of days for the compounded medicine to be ready.
- Pill Pockets and similar products are soft little edible pouches intended to be wrapped around a pill to hide the smell and taste and encourage pets to take their medicine. Many dogs will not think twice about snarfing them down and even some cats will fall for this tactic. Several brands exist, and they come in a variety of flavors to match your pet's preferences.

If you are going to skip the “let's-pretend-it's-a-treat” strategies, or they aren't working well enough, here are a few tips for how to “pill” your pet.

- For cats, gently push the cheeks against the molars as this will encourage them to keep their mouth open in order to not bite themselves (sneaky, but effective).
- Drop or place the pill as far back on their tongue as you can get it. As mentioned above, there is a balance spot on the back of the tongue where swallowing becomes almost a reflex and spitting the pill out is less likely to happen.
- Next, gently hold the pet's mouth closed and give a puff of air into the nose. This sounds silly, but it works. When they lick their nose, the pill has gone down.

You can do it! You might need a little help in the form of liver sausage or a peanut butter sandwich, but getting a pill down can be done.