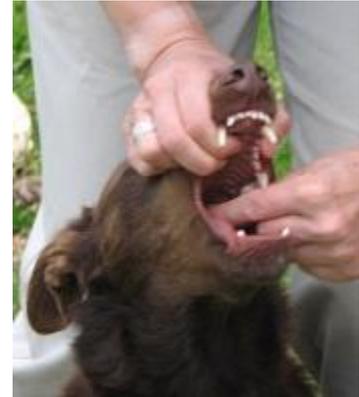


How to Give Your Dog Oral Medication

courtesy of Animal Info Publications

Why do I need to know how to do this?

Oral medications can include tablets, capsules and liquids. Your dog does not need to be sick to require oral meds. For example, worming tablets are a routine part of keeping your dog healthy. And there may be times in the future when your dog needs to take prescription meds from your veterinarian in order to fight an infection, relieve pain or combat a disease. Many dogs will happily take oral meds in their favourite foods or special treats. However there may be times when your dog becomes suspicious of medicated foods and refuses them. Your dog may also refuse food if he is feeling sick or painful. Some drugs also need to be taken on an empty stomach. In this case your only option is to place the medication in the back of the throat and force your dog to swallow. This needs to be done safely and calmly both to avoid you being bitten and to reduce stress to your dog.



How do you give your dog oral meds?

Tablets and capsules.

1. Ask your dog to sit and stay. Reward it with praise. Act assertively and calmly.
2. If you are right handed, hold your dog's muzzle (or upper jaw) with your left hand - have your index finger on one side and your thumb on the other.
3. Tilt the head back and gently fold the upper lip over the dog's teeth as you open the mouth. This means if your dog panics and snaps its jaw shut, it will bite its lip and not your fingers. It also means it will be less like to snap its jaw shut!
4. Have the pill or capsule ready in your right hand between your thumb and index finger and position your middle finger over the dog's incisors to pull the lower jaw apart from the top jaw.
5. Quickly drop the medication as far back in the mouth as possible over the tongue. Close the dog's mouth and hold it closed while you massage its throat to encourage it to swallow. Blowing in its nose can also encourage it to swallow.
6. For very stubborn individuals you may need to physically place the tablet or capsule as far back in the throat as you can reach. This will involve putting most of your right hand inside your dog's mouth to reach as far back as possible and this must be done quickly to avoid getting bitten. Even friendly, well trained dogs may bite as a reflex when they feel fingers far back in their mouths. Make sure your left fingers keep the dog's lip curled around their canines to protect your right hand.
7. You can also buy a pill applicator from your vet. These are usually a plastic applicator with a tip that will loosely hold the pill. It is this applicator which is placed over the back of the dog's tongue instead of your hand. A trigger on the end of the applicator allows you to release the medication when it is in position.

Giving Oral Liquids

1. Liquid meds are best given using a plastic dropper or syringe. NEVER use a glass dropper, pipette or syringe as these will break if the dog bites on it and cause damage to their mouth.
2. Never place liquids into the back of your dog's throat as it may aspirate the liquid into the windpipe or lungs.
3. Again, ask your dog to sit and stay.
4. If you are right handed, use your left hand to lift the gum in the corner of the mouth.
5. Insert the liquid into this space and as above, quickly close the dog's mouth and hold it closed until the meds are swallowed. Remember to massage the throat while holding the mouth closed, or blow into the nose. Do not tip the dog's head backwards as this may cause the liquid to be aspirated.

Your vet or vet nurse/technician will be happy to demonstrate these techniques for you.

Remember to stay calm and steady so as not to make your dog nervous, and always praise them verbally and give some cuddles afterwards as a reward. If you start training your dog to take oral medications before it becomes a necessity then it will reduce the stress on both of you considerably.

Animalinfo does not take any responsibility or liability for any injury that may occur to yourself or your dog as a result of following these directions.