

# Walker Veterinary Hospital

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## HELPFUL TIPS FOR GIVING YOUR DOG A PILL

The easiest way to give your dog a pill is to hide the pill in food. This usually works best if the pill is hidden in a small amount of canned dog food, peanut butter or cottage cheese. To ensure that the pill is swallowed, it is better to hand feed a small amount of food that the dog is certain to eat rather than offering a large portion that the dog may not completely consume. Some dogs may spit out the pill, so it is important to carefully observe your pet after administering the medication.

If your dog persists in spitting out the pills or if dietary restrictions prevent you from hiding the pills in an appealing treat, you will need to administer the pill directly into your dog's mouth.

Place your dog in a safe and comfortable area where it can be easily handled. Have the pill ready and easily accessible.

Make sure that you have carefully read the prescription label and understand the dosing instructions.

Lubricate the pill with a very small amount of margarine or butter so that it doesn't stick in the pet's mouth or throat.

Hold the pill between your thumb and index finger (use your dominant hand – for example, if you are right-handed, use your right hand).



Gently grasp your dog's muzzle from above with your other hand, by placing your thumb on one side and your fingers on the other side behind the canine teeth.

Once you have a firm but gentle grip, tilt your dog's head toward the ceiling. The lower jaw will usually drop open. If not, open the mouth by placing the last two fingers of the hand holding the pill between the two lower canine teeth and pushing downward.

Quickly place the pill as far back over the tongue as possible. The pill is most likely to be swallowed if you place it beyond the hump of the tongue at the back of the mouth. Try not to place your hand too far back to avoid stimulating a gag reflex.

- Close the dog's mouth and hold it closed while you return the head to a normal position.

Gently rub the dog's nose or throat, or blow lightly on the dog's nose. This should stimulate swallowing.

The dog will be most cooperative if this procedure is performed quickly, in one smooth motion.

Make sure you give plenty of praise throughout the procedure and offer a treat or extra playtime after giving the medication. This will make the experience more positive and make it easier to give the medication the next time.

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*This client information sheet is based on material written by Ernest Ward, DVM.  
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