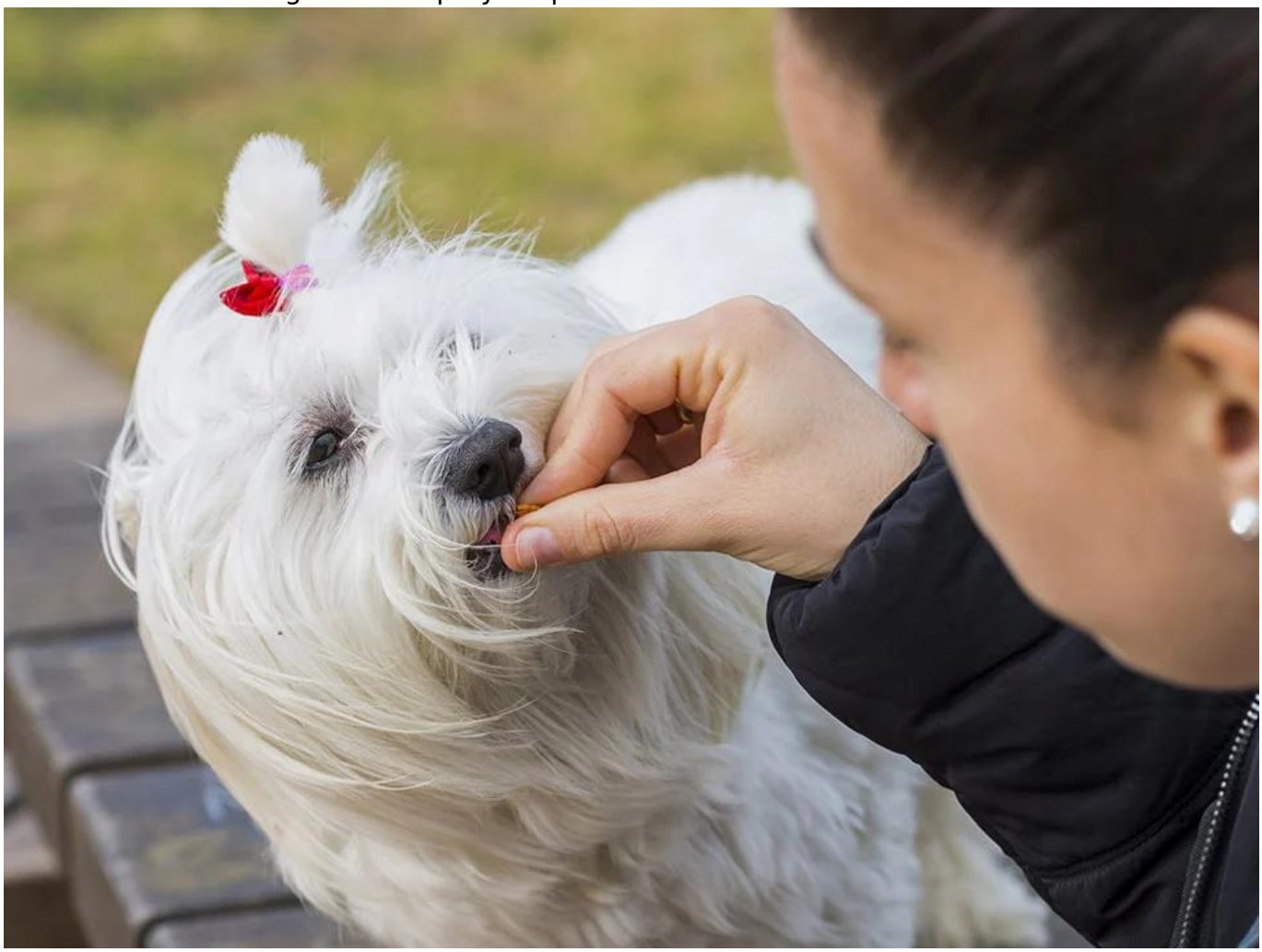


How to Give Your Dog a Pill: Step-by-Step Guide

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Giving your dog pills can be challenging. You can’t explain what they’re for and why they’re important, and so the whole experience can become stressful for both of you.

But it doesn’t have to be! In this guide, we offer you tips for preparing your dog’s medication, as well as how to hide the pills in both treats and food and how to hand-feed them.

We also remind you of the role your veterinarian can play in the process. Always follow their instructions for how much medication your dog needs and how to give it. And don’t be afraid to get in touch with them if your dog has trouble taking it.

Key Takeaways

1. The easiest way to give your dog a pill is by hiding it in a pill pocket, soft treat, or small amount of wet food and hand-feeding to ensure swallowing.
2. If hiding the pill doesn’t work, tilt your dog's head, drop the pill onto the back of their tongue, close their mouth, and rub their throat until they swallow.
3. Having the medication ready before approaching your dog reduces stress and keeps the experience short and sweet.
4. An indication of successful swallowing is if your dog licks their nose or lip after taking a pill. Some dogs spit their pills out later, though, so stay with yours to observe.
5. Follow giving pills with praise and a treat to build positive associations with medication time.
6. If your dog is especially challenging, ask your veterinarian about compounded liquids, flavored formulas, or alternative delivery methods for taking their pills.

What to Know Before Giving Your Dog Medication

Before you call your dog over to get their medication, make sure you have read the prescription label and understand dosing instructions. You also want to know if the pill can be given with food and if it can be split or crushed.

And to make life easier for your dog (and you!), have the medication all set to go and then approach your dog. Less stress for everyone!

Method 1: Hiding the Pill (The Easiest Way)

Most of the time, you’ll be successful with a pill disguised as a treat. Your dog will gobble it up! This method is the least stressful for both of you.

Common Foods for Hiding Pills

A few good hiding foods include:

- Peanut butter
- Cheese
- Cooked sweet potato
- A small amount of canned wet food formed into a ball
- Soft treats that can be molded around the pill

The downside to using human foods like the ones in the list above is that they can be high in calories and, if your dog is clever, they can find a way to eat around the pill.

Why GREENIES™ PILL POCKETS™ Treats Work Better Than Human Food

GREENIES™ PILL POCKETS™ treats for dogs are a great alternative to high-fat human food because their job is to hide pills. And they do it well! Their built-in malleable pouch is designed to fit capsules and tablets, and their taste masks the scent and taste of the medication.

They are also made with natural ingredients, plus trace nutrients. Your dog will think they are getting a special treat when, in fact, it's sneaky medication!

How to Give GREENIES™ PILL POCKETS™ Treats

Table of Contents

Follow these 3 simple steps to give your dog oral medication in a quick and even enjoyable way for the both of you:

1. FILL: Hold a GREENIES™ PILL POCKETS™ Treat with your thumb and forefinger and insert your dog's medicine.



2. PINCH: Using the same hand to hold the PILL POCKETS™ Treat, squeeze the top half closed.



3. GIVE: The PILL POCKETS™ Treat is now sealed, and you can feed it to your dog.



Tips for Hiding Success

Hand-feeding the hidden medication is the best way to get your dog to swallow it. And if you want to make taking pills even more foolproof, give it to your dog when they're hungry. The GREENIES™ PILL POCKETS™ treat will be extra tempting.

Another tip: give your dog the "three treat trick." First, a plain treat, then a medicated treat, and finally, another plain treat. A medicine sandwich! (Note: When using this method, always stick to the recommended pill pocket serving size based on the package instructions.)

Just don’t forget to watch your dog closely after they take the pill. Some dogs get sneaky. They hold the pill in their mouth, walk behind the furniture, and spit it out.

Method 2: Manual Administration (If Hiding Fails)

If your dog is on to you and refuses to take the hidden pill, you can try giving it to them manually.

Positioning Your Dog

Find a time when your dog is free. You don’t want to interrupt them when they’re eating, drinking, grooming themselves, or taking a bathroom break. Bring them to a safe, comfortable place to give their medication. You want enough space to handle them easily.

If your dog is a larger breed or especially anxious, you may want to make this a two-person job! Once you’re ready, follow these step-by-step instructions.

Step-by-Step Technique

1. Lightly wrap the pill for easier swallowing. Make sure to ask your vet what the best option for the vessel is.
2. Hold the pill between your thumb and index finger.
3. Hold your dog's muzzle from above with your other hand.
4. Tilt their head back until their nose points upward.
5. Using your ring finger, gently open their lower jaw.
6. Drop the pill as far back on their tongue as you can.
7. Close their mouth and stroke their throat to encourage swallowing.
8. Watch for your dog to lick their nose or lip, which is a sign the pill was swallowed. Make sure your dog has access to water to help get the pill down.

Making Medication Time a Positive Experience

Taking medication is nobody’s favorite pastime, but you can make your dog’s experience a good one! Give plenty of praise throughout the process, and follow up a successful “pilling” with one of your dog’s favorite treats.

For some dogs, seeing the pill bottle triggers an anxiety response. So it might be helpful to keep the bottle out of sight so your dog doesn’t get worried ahead of time. Finally, try to stay calm and confident. Your best friend can pick up on your anxiety!

When to Contact Your Veterinarian

Don’t be afraid to contact your veterinarian if the pill-giving process is challenging. A few circumstances in which you might want to call include:

- Difficulty administering the medication after multiple attempts
- Your dog is consistently refusing or vomiting the medication
- Having questions about crushing, splitting, or mixing your dog’s medication with food
- Exploring compounded flavored liquids or transdermal alternatives

Make Giving Medication Easier with GREENIES™ PILL POCKETS™ Treats

Medication time doesn’t have to be a battle. With GREENIES™ PILL POCKETS™ Treats, your dog will look forward to their pills, and that means you will too!

GREENIES™ PILL POCKETS™ Treats are recommended by veterinarians and can make giving your dog medicine quick and stress-free. The built-in pouches and malleable texture mask the smell and taste of any medicine and come in yummy flavors like peanut butter, cheese, and chicken.

Whether for a large or small breed dog, GREENIES™ PILL POCKETS™ Treats transform the stress (and mess) of giving your canine companion medicine into a positive experience for both of you!

Contributor

Jessica Gilliam is a veterinarian with more than 14 years of clinical experience, specializing in small animal medicine. She is passionate about surgery, dentistry, mentorship, and education. Jessica serves as the Community Chair for the Tennessee Market at Banfield and oversees Mars Petcare’s PetConnect chat, which offers free educational support for pet parents. In her free time, she enjoys hiking and baking.

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Frequently Asked Questions

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1. **What if my dog still does not swallow the pill?**

   If your dog won’t swallow their medicine after using a hiding method like a pill pocket or an appealing human food like meatballs, you can try using a pet piller device to place the medication in the back of your dog’s throat.

   You can also try enlisting the help of a second person. Four hands are better than two! One of you can hold your dog steady, and the other can give the pill. And if the team approach doesn’t work, contact your veterinarian about compounded liquid alternatives.

2. **Can I crush my dog's pill and mix it into food?**

   Some medications have protective coatings, and when they’re crushed, they release the bitter taste of the medicine. This means your dog may be less likely to take it. Time-release pills need to stay whole to work, so they can’t be crushed or split either.

   Always ask your veterinarian before altering your dog’s medication in any way.

3. **What should I do if my dog bites down when I try to give a pill?**

   Try gently folding your dog’s upper lip over their teeth before opening their mouth. This way, if they bite down, they’ll press against their own lip instead of your fingers.

   You can also try using a pet piller device, which keeps your hands out of your dog’s mouth.

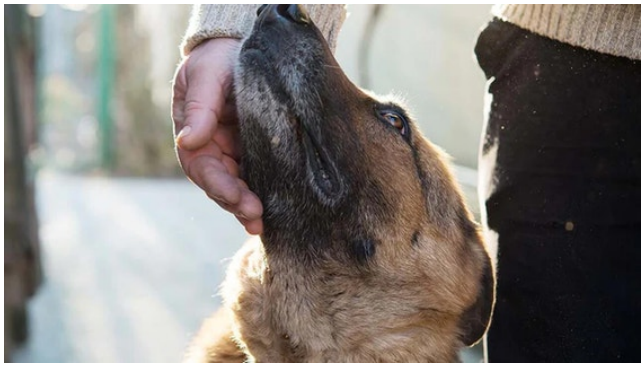
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