

How to Administer Eye Medication to Your Cat

- Many eye conditions in cats require medicine to be put directly into the eye.
- Follow your veterinarian's recommendations closely.
- Always put health and safety first. If the procedure seems dangerous to you or very painful for your pet, stop and consult your veterinarian.

The Basics

Many eye conditions in cats require medicine to be put directly into the eye. This procedure can be relatively easy, as long as you follow a few simple guidelines. The most important guideline is to always put health and safety first. If, for any reason, your cat becomes so agitated that you feel you are at risk of being bitten, stop. If the procedure seems excessively painful for your cat, stop and get your veterinarian's advice.

Follow Recommendations

The eye is a very delicate structure. It is very important to closely follow your veterinarian's recommendations for medicating your cat's eye. Treating too frequently or too aggressively can make the problem worse, not better. Sensitive, already inflamed parts of the eye can be damaged.

It is important to use only medicines prescribed by a veterinarian and to treat for the full length of time prescribed. Do not stop treatment early, even if the problem seems to be resolved.

What You Need

- Safe work area
- Eye medication prescribed by your veterinarian
- Moist cotton balls or tissues

Technique

There are several techniques for applying eye medication. Only one is described here. Ask your veterinarian

to demonstrate application of the prescribed medicine and follow his or her recommendations.

- If necessary, gently restrain your cat (*see box*). You may need a helper.
- Using moistened cotton balls or tissues, gently wipe away any discharge from around the eye.
- Hold the affected eye open with the fingers of one hand. If the medication is liquid (eye drops), hold the upper and lower eyelids apart; if the medication is an ointment, gently pull down on the lower eyelid to create a small gap between the lid and the eye. You may see a white membrane (the third eyelid) partly covering the eye.
- With your other hand, gently squeeze the prescribed amount of medicine into the eye. Drops can be applied to the center of the eye or in the gap between the eye and the lower lid; ointment can be placed in the gap. **Do not touch your cat's eye with the medicine container or your fingers.**
- **Note:** If an eye medication requires refrigeration, do not store it at room temperature; however, allow it to reach room temperature

Signs of Eye Trouble

- Excessive tearing
- Discharge
- Red eyelids
- Third eyelid visible
- Squinting or closing eye
- Cloudy or dull-looking surface; visible mark on surface
- Pawing at face
- Swelling or bulging around, near, or in eye

Home Care

before use to make it more comfortable for your pet.

- Either allow your pet to blink to move the medicine across the eye, or, using a very light touch, hold the eye closed for a moment and gently massage.

- Use cotton balls or tissues to gently wipe away any excess medication or discharge.
- Reward your cat with a treat.

Contact your veterinarian if you have questions or difficulty administering any medication.

Restraining Your Cat

Keeping your cat still while you medicate his or her eye is important so that you do not accidentally damage the eye or touch the eye with the medicine container. Here are some tips:

- Place your cat in your lap and allow him or her to lie down flat on his or her side. Put one arm—the one you will use to hold the eye open—on top of your pet's body, and use your upper arm and elbow to help keep him or her still. Do not use excessive force to hold your cat still.
- If your cat will not stay in your lap, you can use the same method while seated on the floor. Your cat may be more comfortable sitting upright.
- Alternatively, cats can be wrapped in a large towel and held against your body, leaving only the head free. Be sure not to wrap your cat too tightly.
- If your cat struggles, talk to him or her calmly. Stop if he or she becomes extremely agitated.