

HOW TO ADMINISTER EYE MEDICATION TO YOUR CAT

General Practice & Preventative Medicine - Ophthalmology

GIVING EYE MEDICATION

Frequently, your veterinarian prescribes medication after an eye examination.

Administering these medications can sometimes be difficult. Some cats, especially if their eyes are painful, are resistant to the administration of medication. Diligence and patience are necessary to give the medication successfully, which will help resolve the eye problem. There are several techniques that may facilitate giving eye medication (drops or ointment) to your pet.

METHOD 1

- Have someone restrain your cat by holding her front legs and chest, or wrap your cat firmly in a blanket or towel. Let your cat sit on the counter or table and hold the cat closely against your body.
- Place the medication in your dominant hand with the lid off.
- If you are right-handed and the right eye needs medication, rest your right hand on top of the head in order to stabilize your hand. Your hand should be near the inner side of the eye closest to the nose. With your left hand, place the thumb near the lower eyelid and the forefinger near the upper eyelid. This also works if you are left-handed and the cat needs medication in his left eye.
- If you are right-handed and the left eye needs medication, stand on the right side of the cat, facing the same direction as the cat. With the medication in your right hand, rest this hand on top of the head to stabilize. Reach across the cat and place the index finger of your left hand near the lower eyelid and your left thumb near the upper eyelid. This also works if you are left-handed and the right eye needs medication.
- Spread the eyelids apart using your thumb and forefinger.
- Apply the medication directly on the surface of the eye or into the small gap between the lower eyelid and the surface of the eye. Be very careful not to touch the surface of the eye with the tip of the medication container.

- Once the medication has been administered, open and close the eyelid one or two times with your thumb and forefinger in order to spread the medication over the entire surface of the eye.

METHOD 2

- If the eye medication is ointment, gently squeeze about 1/8" out the end of the tube. Hold the cat's head with your free hand, and with the other hand, touch the crease in the eyelids closest to the nose with the tube of medication. The spot to aim for is the point where the two eyelids meet. The cat will blink the exposed ointment off the tip of the tube.
- The third eyelid sits in this same area and will move upward when the eyelid crease is touched and will prevent the tube from touching the cornea.
- The same method can be used at the outside corner of the eyelids, but there is no third eyelid in this area, so you must be careful not to touch the cornea with the tube.
- After administering the ointment, wipe the tip of the tube with a fresh Kleenex or piece of cotton and replace the cap.

METHOD 3

- If the eye medication is a solution, and if your cat objects to having the medication dropped directly onto the surface of the eye or objects to having the eyelids opened, then simply hold the cat's head in an upward position and make him look towards the ceiling.
- Approach the eye with the bottle of medication, from either the front of the head or over the top of the back of the head. As the bottle gets closer to the eye, the cat often closes its eyes. Drop a single drop of medication onto the crease where the eyelids touch and come together.
- Continue to hold the head in an upward position for a full minute after the drop is applied to the crease. Gravity will cause the solution to ooze slowly downward through the small gap in the eyelids.
- With this method, some of the solution may be lost onto the skin around the eye, but cats may tolerate this method better.

FOLLOWING ADMINISTRATION OF THE MEDICATIONS

- Most likely your cat will be somewhat disgruntled from the treatment and the restraint. To keep the experience from being too negative (and to keep your cat from hiding the next time he sees the eye medication), speak soothingly to your cat and give him plenty of praise and petting. Also consider giving him a treat or some catnip after the session.

