

HOW TO APPLY TOPICAL MEDICATION TO YOUR DOG

General Practice & Preventative Medicine

APPLYING TOPICAL MEDICINE

Medications come in a variety of forms – pills, liquids and ointments. New flea and tick products are most commonly associated with topical application but other drugs are also available, such as antibiotic creams and ointments for wound care.

Some topical medications include an applicator for easy administration. For flea and tick products, once applied to the skin, the medication is absorbed by the skin, where it enters the bloodstream. From there, it is distributed throughout the body. Some, like antibiotic creams and ointments, are intended to work primarily at the site of injury, although a small amount does get absorbed into the system.

Administration of topical medication is quite simple but it requires your pet to remain still for a brief time. The medication needs to be placed in an area that the dog cannot lick. If the medication is intended to treat a wound, your pet may need an Elizabethan collar to prevent licking the wound and medication. For flea and tick treatments, the best recommendation is to place the medication on the skin between the shoulder blades.

Try the following method:

- Hold the applicator upright and snap off the tip to allow the medication to flow out of the applicator.
- Hold your dog still. Your dog can be standing, lying down or even sitting. Just make sure you have access to the necessary area.
- For flea and tick products, read the instructions on the medication to determine if the manufacturers recommend applying in one area or multiple areas.
- For wound treatment, follow your veterinarian's recommendation on the frequency of medicating the wound.
- Place the tip of the applicator through the hair and place directly against the skin or against the wound.

- Squeeze the applicator until all of the medication has flowed out of the applicator. Try to avoid application of the medication on the hair.