

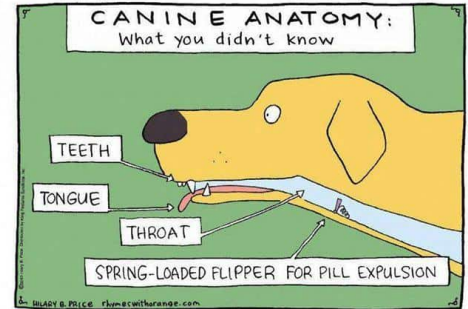
Giving Your Dog Pills

without a struggle



Some dogs take pills easily, but for others, it seems that whatever we hide the pill in, the dog will find it and spit it out. With a new dog or puppy, we may perhaps not know until the first time we try to give them a pill whether they will take it easily or not.

For both dogs that are unwilling pill takers, and for new dogs as a preparatory protocol, here is a protocol for how you can teach your puppy or dog to take pills willingly. If pill-taking is urgent, you can cram this exercise into a day or two, but you must not reduce the number of repetitions.



1. Decide on a soft, smelly treat that your dog REALLY loves, and reserve those treats for this exercise only. Examples: peanut butter, cheese, honey, liver pate, cream cheese, banana, canned tripe, ice cream, etc. Some of these treats will have to be given with a teaspoon, which can also be helpful.
2. At least twice a day for a week, give your dog five of these treats, one after the other in quick succession, WITHOUT any pills. Use a happy cue to call your dog to this special treat session, like "Pill Time!" or "Come and get your pills!".
3. For the second week, add a small treat of a different kind but that your dog LIKES (representing a "pill"), to one of the five treats. The purpose of this step is to get the dog used to there being a different item inside one of the treats. Make sure the 'fake pill' is NOT in the first or the last treat.

Sometimes, put the fake pill in treat number 2, sometimes in treat number 3, and sometimes in treat number 4, like this:



- By NOT putting the fake pill in the first treat, we are building a fluent behaviour of eating five treats quickly.

- By NOT putting the fake pill in the last treat, we are rewarding the dog for taking the 'pill-treat' by giving him more treats.

4. After a week at step #3, change the fake pill to something your dog does not care for, but that is still good for him, like a small piece of carrot or broccoli, or similar. Make it as small as a regular pill and proceed with the same protocol as under step #3.
5. When needed, replace the fake pill with your dog's regular medication.
6. Unless your dog is taking pills regularly, maintain this exercise by repeating step #4 once a week or so.

Only progress to the next step after a week of successful repetitions on the previous step.

If your dog's medication is particularly foul-tasting, ask your vet if it would be appropriate to hide it in an empty gel capsule (available from health food stores or from Amazon) before you put it into the treat.

IMPORTANT

You may want to try to break the pills into pieces or crush them into a powder. Before you do so, please check with the veterinarian that prescribed the medication if this can be done, because some medications must not be broken up.

