

# Hard to Swallow



**For cats that need medication, pill pockets save the day.**



BY SANDY ROBINS

**R**ecently, I was reading some serious advice on how to give a cat a pill.

After the second sentence, I had a stitch in my side from laughter.

"If hiding the pill in food doesn't work, you are going to have to administer it physically," explained this feline authority. "Firmly grasp your cat's head. If you are right-handed, use your left hand; if you are a lefty, use your right hand ... Put your thumb on one side of your cat's face and your fingers on the other. Avoid holding the lower jaw, and make sure you don't squeeze the throat. Otherwise, you'll choke the cat. ..."

Whoever penned this textbook approach to feline health care must own a dog. No self-respecting cat is going to let you stick your fingers in its mouth long enough to choke it! Can you know exactly how to play the pill popping game?

The guidelines found on the Internet are much more realistic. There are many different versions out there. Here are mine based on personal experience:

Wait until your cat is fast asleep, then gently pick her up, and place her in the crook of your left arm, as you would a baby. Pretend you are going to tickle her under the chin. Instead, put your right forefinger and thumb on either side of her mouth and gently apply pressure to her cheeks. Before she gets suspicious, pop the pill.

Put her down, pretending this was your plan all along. Pick up the pill off the floor, and coax kitty out from behind the sofa. Wait until you have her back in purr mode, and then repeat the process.

Pretend you are looking for your slippers, and then pounce on her under the bed. If you are

left with a handful of fut, call a neighbor to come and help lift up the bed.

Throw away the soggy pill, and ask the neighbor to stay.

Two hours and a bottle of wine later, take a new pill from the foil wrap. Talk softly in kitty's ear, and try the baby-cradling thing again; only this time, grab her rear paws and hold tightly. Get your inebriated neighbor to force open your cat's jaw while you thrust the pill into the back of her throat. Hold your breath, and count to 30.

Get out a magnifying glass, and search for the pill on the pattern of your Oriental rug. Leave the cat on top of the wardrobe while you bribe the neighbor to stay a little longer.

Next, pretend you are getting a suitcase down from the top of the wardrobe, where kitty nose is sitting. When she starts manicuring her nails, grab her. Wrestle her to the floor, and wedge her firmly between your knees. Hold her front and back paws. Get your neighbor to blow gently in her face. When the cat opens her mouth, pop the pill and rub her throat vigorously.

Make a mental note to call the veterinarian for more pills.

I have to say, my veterinarian, Jeff Glass, has no illusions when it comes to my cat Cali and medications. He has, on more than one occasion, called her "feisty."

"Here," he said, putting a packet of pill pockets in my hand when he decided to put her on medication that involved giving her two capsules twice daily. "You are going to need to stock up on these."

The cookie dough-type treat has got to be the best feline invention ever. The instructions are simple: Take one pocket, place pill in the middle and roll the dough around it so it looks like a treat. Place in front of cat. Count to three. End of story. ☐

*Sandy Robins is an award-winning pet-lifestyle expert who appears regularly on TV, radio and in international publications. She is an obsessed pet owner to her cats Cali and Fudge.*