CORNELL UNIVERSITY
HOSPITAL for ANIMALS
PHARMACY

GIVING YOUR DOG ORAL MEDICATIONS

Relax! Your dog will reflect your emotions. If you are anxious, your dog will likewise react. Relax and be calm. However, try to keep in mind that the quicker you can go through the process of giving medication, the easier it is for the both of you. It does get less stressful with time and experience.

Prepare all of the medications that you are about to give, before you call for your dog. Tablets and capsules should be individually set out and liquids drawn up into an oral syringe. Tablets and capsules may be wrapped into a small piece of meat, bread or cheese that is tasty to your dog. Check with your veterinarian or pharmacist first, though, because not all medications are compatible with cheese products.

When you are ready, call your dog to come to you in a happy voice. Bring your dog into a corner of the room and position his rear end into the corner, so that he cannot back away from you.

With one hand, grasp your dog's muzzle from above. Position your hand so that the tips of your fingers are at the corner of the mouth on one side and your thumb at the corner of the mouth on the other side.

While gently tipping your dog's head back so that the chin points upwardly, squeeze behind the canine upper teeth with your fingers. This should cause the lower jaw to open a little bit. With your other hand, push on the lower front teeth to open the jaw further.

Quickly place the medication as far back in the mouth as possible, preferably on the back of the tongue. Do not place your hand too far into the mouth, however, as this may cause your dog to choke and gag.

Gently lower your dog's head and keep his mouth closed by wrapping your fingers around his muzzle. Gently rubbing or blowing on your dog's nose may stimulate swallowing, if it is necessary.

If giving a liquid, do not tilt your dog's chin upward. Place the liquid filled syringe into the side of the mouth, just past the lower teeth. Slowly squirt small amounts into the mouth, pausing between squirts to allow your dog to swallow the medication without gagging or choking.

Give your dog plenty of praise, always using your happy voice, and possibly give him a treat. A positive output from you will hopefully make the next time go easier and smoother.

Remember, it is important that your dog gets all of the medication prescribed by your veterinarian for the entire length of time that therapy has been prescribed. If you continue to have difficulty getting all of the medication into your dog, contact your veterinarian for advice and assistance.