



## What are behavior medications?

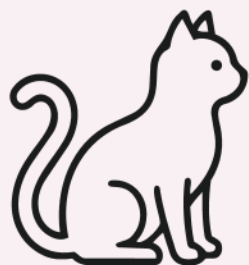
- Drugs that can help cats experiencing behavior issues, such as litter box avoidance/urine marking, inter-cat conflict, aggressive behavior and hyperactivity
- The medications reduce anxiety and fear by affecting certain neurotransmitters (brain chemicals)
- The most commonly impacted neurotransmitters are serotonin and norepinephrine

**Serotonin:**  
regulates mood  
and sleep

**Norepinephrine:**  
regulates alertness  
and stress  
responses

**NEVER give your cat a human's prescribed medication. Only give your cat medication that has been prescribed for THEM by a veterinarian.**

## Does my cat need behavior medication?



Whether a cat would benefit from medication depends on:

- the severity and duration of the behavior problem
- the cat's overall health and quality of life
- whether the cat is at risk of losing their life or home
- the impact of the cat's behavior on human wellbeing

Behavior medication is not a substitute for training and environmental changes. But meds often complement a behavior modification plan and can speed up progress.

The goal of behavior medication is to help your cat, not to “drug” them. By reducing fear and anxiety, many pets are happier and have a better ability to learn, making training and other behavior modification more effective.

## Do you need a veterinary behaviorist (VB)?

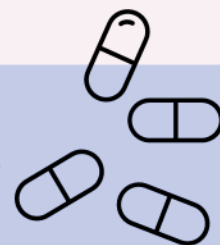
- A veterinarian with specialized training in behavior
- Very familiar with different medications that may be helpful for your cat
- They can also advise you on training and behavior modification
- A great resource if your cat's regular veterinarian is not comfortable with behavior medication
- Some VBs will also consult directly with your veterinarian for a lower fee
- Find a VB at [dacvb.org](http://dacvb.org)

## How do I get the medication into my cat?

Most behavior medications taste TERRIBLE! They should not be crushed and mixed into food. Talk to your veterinarian about what formulations might work best with your cat. Options include: pills, capsules, liquid, mini-melts, granules, flavored compounded treats, and a cream that can be rubbed into the ear.

One of the easiest ways to medicate your cat is by putting pills into a gel capsule or using medication compounded into capsules. The gel cap hides the taste and texture of the pills. Cats can be trained to eat these gel caps in a wet treat (such as a lickable or baby food).

See: [cattrainingandhandlingvideos.com/category/medication/](https://cattrainingandhandlingvideos.com/category/medication/)



## How long does it take for the medication to work?

It can take 4 to 8 weeks to see the full therapeutic benefits of a behavior medication. Talk to your veterinarian about what to expect.



## Are there side effects?

Many behavior medications have side effects at first, including lethargy, diarrhea, and appetite changes. Some cats experience more side effects than others. Keep an eye on your cat, especially in the first few days. Although your cat may be sleepy, they should still be enjoying life, eating, using their litter box, and playing.

## When to reach out to your veterinarian

Let your veterinarian know if:

- your cat is not eating, is vomiting, is eliminating less frequently than usual, or has difficulty peeing or pooping
- side effects continue, worsen, or your cat seems “out of it”

Behavior medication should not make your cat a zombie. Sometimes a different dose or a different medication is needed to reduce side effects.



## Stopping medication

Always give the medication as prescribed. In most cases, you should not stop your cat’s treatment abruptly. Cats usually need to be slowly weaned off their medication. Talk to your veterinarian, who can help you with a plan.