

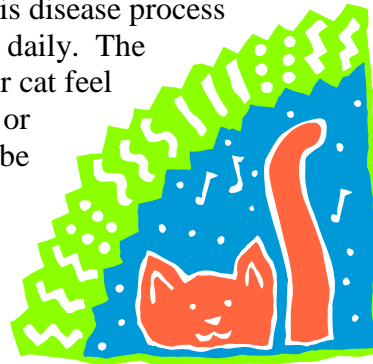
How to Give Sub-Cutaneous Fluids to Your Cat



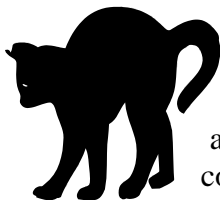
Overview

Fluids come in 1000ml or 1-liter bags and must be prescribed by your veterinarian for the specific needs of your cat. They are sterile and contain nutrients and electrolytes necessary for bodily function. The fluids are administered through tubing attached to the bag and a needle inserted under your cat's skin between the neck and shoulder blades.

Fluids given under the skin (sub-cutaneously or Sub-Q) are absorbed into the blood stream and are used to correct or prevent dehydration. Fluids are given for a variety of reasons. The most common disease that requires fluid therapy is chronic renal failure (CRF). Cat's with CRF pass large amounts of urine and may not feel well enough, or be able to drink adequate volumes of water, to prevent dehydration. Dehydration also decreases blood flow to the kidneys and causes a more rapid decline in kidney function. You can help your cat through this disease process by giving fluids several times weekly or even, in some cases, daily. The supplemental fluids will support your cat's kidneys, help your cat feel better by increasing hydration, flush waste products from his or her body, and improve overall quality of life. CRF cats may be able to live several additional good years with regular fluid therapy, appropriate medications and a proper diet.



Your cat's veterinarian determines the volume of fluids to give based on your cat's weight and disease process. Do not administer more fluids than prescribed for risk of over-hydrating your cat or placing undo stress on his or her heart and lungs. Along with volume, the frequency of fluid administration varies per cat. Some cat's do well with fluids once or twice weekly while others need fluid support daily.



After fluids are administered, your cat may have a "hump-back" or "camel-back" caused by the collection of fluids into a pocket or pouch. The pocket may be present in some cats for up to 24 hours and may slip down to a front leg or the abdominal area until the fluids are completely absorbed. The pouch should be completely gone by the time the next fluid administration is needed.

How to Give Sub-Cutaneous Fluids to Your Cat



Set-Up and Materials:

The supplies you will need for giving fluids are:

- A liter bag of fluids
- A venoset (tubing and IV line) and
- A 19ga or 18ga needle.

Now:

- Remove the fluids and the tubing from their packages.



- Lock the venoset by rolling the wheel valve into a closed position to prevent fluid flow while you assemble the parts.



- Remove the tab from the fluid bag and insert the venoset, pushing it in as far as it will go.



- Hang the fluids as high as you can, because gravity helps the fluids to flow faster. In this case, we are hanging them from a hanger placed on a sturdy wall light fixture. A cabinet door sometimes works nicely. You can also hang a hook in a convenient place.

- Pinch the reservoir to fill it about half full.



- Place the needle on the end of the venoset, remove the cap and run the fluid through the tubing to remove any air.

Administering the Fluids

- Place your cat in a comfortable position
- Pull the skin up on your cat's back around the shoulder blades
- Make a "tent" of the skin and, with the needle parallel to your cat's body, insert it with a quick, smooth motion into the base of the tent and towards your cat's head.



- Once the needle is in place, release the skin and open the roller valve on the venoset tubing.

- The fluids will begin to flow. If the drip seems slow, rotate the needle slightly while it is still inserted. Also check the tubing and be sure it is not crimped over the area where the roller valve was closed.
- Once the required amount of fluid has been administered, close the roller valve, remove the needle from the patient, and replace the cap on the needle.

There are 1000mls in a bag of fluids. The numbers on the sides of the bag distinguish the hundred marks.



Replace the used needle with a clean one. Store the fluid bag in a cool dark area, leaving the venoset and needle attached.

- Praise your cat, feed a yummy treat and cheerfully let your cat go on with his or her day.



Hints and Encouragement

- The more confident and relaxed you are, the more at ease your cat will be when you administer fluids.
- Although it helps to have a second person assist, this entire process can be done alone.
- Inserting the needle is the most stressful part of the process. You can practice your “stick” on a fresh turkey or chicken from the grocery store.
- A quick “stick” of the needle is less painful than a slow push, but be careful not to do it so fast that you lose control or insert the needle too far.
- With a little practice, this process will become routine for both you and your cat and should take less than five minutes to administer up to 150ml of fluids.
- You may find it easier as a two-person job. One to distract, pet, talk to or hold your cat and one to administer the fluids.
- If possible, choose an area in your home that has a window for your cat to look through and be distracted. If you are a two-person team, have one person amuse the cat by dangling a toy in front of him or her. Try diverting the cat with the smell of tuna on your fingers.
- Hang the bag from a planter hook or cupboard handle, which will give height to the bag and increase the rate of delivery of fluids.
- Some cats are more comfortable being placed in a box, carrier, bathtub or sink so they are less likely to squirm away from you.
- Choose alternate insertion sites each time you administer fluids to decrease the build-up of scar tissue.
- Don't get discouraged!! If you or your cat becomes stressed out during the process, stop and try again later. There are times your cat may tolerate the fluids quite well and other times when he or she just won't. Cats seem to pick up on our vibes, so stay calm and if it doesn't go well one day and you don't get the entire dose in, simply stop and start again the next



day. As time goes on, you'll begin to feel like a pro and wonder why you were so worried about this.

- Be sure to give your cat a treat or a bite of a favorite food after their treatment. Cats may tolerate the fluids better if they come to expect that something good will come immediately afterward.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I dispose of Needles?

You may purchase from The Cat Doctor a 4-quart "sharps container" or make a container of your own. You must choose a container that cannot be seen through, such as a coffee can or plastic pop bottle covered in duct tape. Label your container "used" and place the used needles in it. Tape the lid when the container is full. Mark your homemade container with a biohazard label and store them in a safe place away from children and animals.

How do I dispose of empty fluid bags and venoset?

You can conveniently dispose of these items in the regular trash or garbage.

How many times can I reuse the venoset?

You may use the same venoset on three bags of fluids provided that the tip does not come in contact with anything but the hub of a needle. Do not take the needle off and leave the venoset tip unprotected or you will have to replace the venoset.

How many times can I reuse the needles?

Use the needles only once, and then dispose of them safely. (See "How do I dispose of Needles" above)

What do I do if the needle comes out?

You can quickly close the roller valve and reinsert the needle. There will probably be some leakage of fluid from the original insertion site. This is normal.

Or, you can simply stop, close the roller valve, give your cat a treat and try again later.

What do I do if I see blood or blood-tinged liquid at the site where I inserted the needle?

Not to worry. Occasionally you may hit a skin capillary and see some bleeding or blood tinged solution leaking from the needle site. Simply use a Kleenex or gauze pad and squeeze the site to apply pressure and stop the bleeding.

How do I get more medications and supplies (fluids, needles, venosets)?

When you are running low, please call The Cat Doctor Hospital at 327-7706. One of our receptionists will take your request for a refill. Once the veterinarian has had time to review your cat's case, your cat's medications and supplies will be refilled or you will be contacted with further instructions. Please allow 24 hours to refill all medications and supplies.

How long is a bag of fluids good for?

A bag of fluids should be good for 4-6 weeks if handled correctly. If there are still remaining fluids in the bag after this amount of time, discard this bag and start with a new one.

Can I warm the fluids before giving them?

Fluids can be warmed by placing them in a container of warm tap water. They should not be warmed in the microwave.

Much of the phrasing and ideas presented in this informative manual were gleaned from the website: www.felinecrf.com. The Cat Doctor Veterinary Hospital & Hotel would like to acknowledge and thank you for your excellent site and hard work.