

How to administer subcutaneous fluids to your cat

Kidney disease can be uncomfortable for your cat, but learning to administer subcutaneous fluids at home can work wonders towards helping him or her feel better. It takes a little practice, but learning to perform the procedure will prevent a potentially stressful trip to the veterinarian—few cats enjoy being placed in a carrier, after all—and allow you to help manage your cat's condition from the comfort of your own home. Follow these steps to administer fluids:



1. Assemble your supplies

Your veterinarian should provide you with a fluid bag and line, complete with clamps and needles. You'll also want to find some sort of makeshift IV stand, like a clothes hanger—the higher the bag hangs, the better the fluids will flow.



2. Find a cozy spot

Try to administer fluids during a quiet, peaceful time when your cat is relaxed—possibly when she's lounging in the afternoon sunlight.



3. Check the fluid level

Before you begin administering the fluids, check the level inside the fluid bag. This will give you a starting point so you can administer the correct amount based on your veterinarian's recommendation.



4. Tent the skin

Pet your cat for a few minutes, then use your fingers to “tent” the skin between her shoulder blades. This is where you'll insert the needle.



5. Insert the needle

With a firm grip, insert the needle under the skin and hold it in place. Continue to reassure your cat. *Note: Use a new needle each time you administer fluids.*



6. Unclamp the fluid line

Unclamp the fluid line while holding the needle in place. Your cat may meow, but she shouldn't be in any pain—most cats don't even notice the needle.



7. Watch the insertion site

If you notice a lot of fluid leaking out, it means you may not have inserted the needle correctly. Don't panic; simply remove the needle and try a new spot.



8. Clamp the fluid line

When you've administered the correct amount of fluid, clamp the fluid line.



9. Remove the needle

Pull out the needle while gently pinching your cat's skin. You may notice a slight bulge—that's normal and should subside as her body absorbs the fluids.