

Behavioral Meds and Your Pet

What's Normal, What's Not, & What To Expect

Consult Your Vet

Advice on med types and dosage should only come from vets. What works for a neighbor's pet may be dangerous for your's. Pet and humans are very different, so never use your human meds. If you have leftover meds from a previous pet or situation, never give them without current approval from your vet. Never start or abruptly stop without vet approval (even if THIS pet has had THIS med before).

If you see concerning behaviors after starting meds, like excessive barking, aggression, or irritability, let your vet know ASAP!

Continuity can be very beneficial in this process. If the practice you visit has multiple vets, request the same one each time.

General Info

- In this document, "meds" means behavioral meds specifically
- Some meds are given "as needed" or situationally, while others must be given daily. This document focuses on the latter.
- Meds often taste horrible, esp to cats. Forcing meds down their throat can be more stressful than no meds at all, so ask about compounding into flavored or transdermal forms for lower-stress admin
- Give daily meds at consistent times. Missing doses or stopping suddenly can be distressing - stick to a schedule!

Week 1

Often, pets have no noticeable side effects but to be safe, spend lots of time observing them this week.

Starting doses are usually low, but you may see loss of appetite or nausea. Some pets become clingy; others avoidant. Some seem out of sorts, lethargic, or "drunk", which may indicate too high a starting dose. If you see any of the above, Let your vet know; don't give up! Small adjustments may help.

Weeks 2 & 3

Early side effects should start to subside and you may even notice some behavioral improvements at this point.

Weeks 4 to 6+

The full effects of the dosage are accumulating about now. Your pet should be back to their normal self, though you may notice some ongoing appetite decrease. If you have not seen much behavioral improvement, your vet may increase dosage at this point, add a second medication, or even change to another med entirely. This is normal and common! Some pets will eventually wean off their meds, some stay on them for life. Both are normal. Each pet is an individual.

