

Ten Lives Cat Rescue - Medication and Treatment Administration Policy

Purpose:

This policy outlines the procedures and guidelines for the safe and effective administration of medications to cats in the care of Ten Lives Cat Rescue. It ensures that all medications are given correctly and only by trained individuals to promote the health and well-being of foster cats.

Scope:

This policy applies to all volunteers, foster caregivers, and staff involved in the care of foster cats who require medication or subcutaneous fluids. Only individuals who have received proper training may administer these treatments.

1. General Guidelines for Medication Administration

1.1 Prescription Medications

- **Veterinary Authorisation:** All medications (oral, topical, or injectable) must be prescribed or approved by a licensed veterinarian before administration.
- **Accurate Dosing:** Only the prescribed dosage and frequency of medication, as directed by the veterinarian, should be administered.
- **Labelling:** Medication containers must be clearly labelled with the cat's name, the type of medication, dosage, administration method, and expiration date.
- **Record Keeping:** All medications given must be documented in the cat's medical records, including the name of the medication, dose, date, and time of administration.

1.2 Medication Handling

- **Safe Storage:** Medications must be stored according to the veterinarian's and manufacturer's instructions (e.g., refrigeration if necessary), and out of reach of children and pets.
- **Expiration Date:** Medications must not be used past their expiration date.
- **Proper Administration:** Medications should be given following the veterinarian's instructions. For example:
 - **Oral Medications:** Tablets, capsules, or liquids administered directly by mouth or mixed with food as directed.
 - **Topical Medications:** Creams, ointments, or solutions applied to the skin, eyes, or ears, ensuring that the area is not accessible to the cat for grooming until absorbed.
 - **Injectable Medications:** Non-subcutaneous injections should only be given by a trained veterinary professional.

1.3 Administration by Trained Individuals

- **Training Requirement:** Only foster caregivers, staff, or volunteers who have undergone training from a veterinarian or experienced medical staff are permitted to administer medications, particularly injectable or complex treatments.

- **Consultation:** Foster caregivers must reach out to a veterinarian or the rescue's medical coordinator if they are unsure of how to administer a medication or if complications arise (e.g., cat's refusal to take medication).
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2. Subcutaneous (Sub-Q) Fluids Administration

2.1 Eligibility for Administration

- **Veterinary Approval:** Sub-Q fluids should only be given with direct approval from a veterinarian, typically for conditions such as dehydration, kidney disease, or other medical issues.
- **Trained Individuals:** Only individuals who have been trained by a veterinarian or experienced medical professional can administer subcutaneous fluids.

2.2 Equipment and Fluids

- **Sterile Equipment:** All materials, including needles, syringes, and IV fluid bags, must be sterile and used according to veterinary guidelines.
- **Storage:** Fluids should be stored in a cool, dry place. Open fluid bags should be used within the timeframe recommended by the veterinarian, and the injection site and equipment must be kept sterile to prevent infection.
- **Disposal:** needles must be disposed of after a single use, and never shared between animals, even those of the same litter. Disposal must be via an approved clinical waste bin.

2.3 Administration Procedures

- **Training Requirement:** Foster caregivers or volunteers administering sub-Q fluids must have received hands-on training and demonstrated competency in the following:
 - **Preparation:** Setting up the IV bag and line, attaching the needle, and ensuring proper hygiene.
 - **Fluid Amount and Rate:** Understanding the prescribed amount of fluids and the appropriate rate of administration.
 - **Safe Injection:** Inserting the needle in the correct area (typically between the shoulder blades), monitoring the cat for signs of distress, and ensuring the fluids are absorbed correctly.
 - **Comfort and Restraint:** Knowing how to keep the cat calm and comfortable during the procedure without causing unnecessary stress or injury.

2.4 Monitoring and Follow-up

- **Observation:** After administering fluids, the caregiver must observe the cat for any adverse reactions (e.g., lethargy, swelling at the injection site, or allergic reaction) and report concerns to the rescue's medical coordinator or veterinarian.
- **Record Keeping:** The caregiver must document the administration of fluids, including the date, amount given, and any observations regarding the cat's response to the treatment.

3. Record Keeping and Communication

3.1 Documentation of Treatments

- **Medical Records:** All medications and sub-Q fluids administered to foster cats must be recorded in the cat's medical records, which are kept by the rescue. The record should include:
 - Type of medication or fluid.
 - Dosage and method of administration.
 - Date and time of each administration.
 - Any observations regarding the cat's reaction to the treatment.

3.2 Communication with Rescue and Veterinarians

- **Reporting Side Effects:** Foster caregivers must immediately notify the rescue's medical coordinator if the cat experiences any side effects from medications or fluids, such as vomiting, diarrhoea, swelling, or lethargy.
- **Progress Updates:** Caregivers should regularly communicate with the rescue team about the cat's progress, especially if there is a change in condition that may require adjustments to the treatment plan.

4. Emergency Protocols

4.1 Medical Emergencies Related to Medications or Fluids

- **Immediate Contact:** If a foster cat has an adverse reaction to medication or fluids, such as an allergic reaction, severe distress, or collapse, caregivers must contact the veterinarian or rescue emergency contact immediately.
- **Emergency Procedures:** If an emergency occurs outside of regular veterinary hours, foster caregivers should follow the rescue's emergency protocols, which include contacting the rescue's designated emergency vet clinic or an emergency on-call veterinarian.

5. Compliance and Review

5.1 Compliance with Veterinary Instructions

- Foster caregivers and volunteers must comply with all veterinary and rescue instructions regarding the administration of medications and fluids. Failure to do so may result in the reassignment of the cat to another foster home or other corrective actions.

5.2 Policy Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects current best practices in the administration of medications and subcutaneous fluids to cats. Updates will be made as needed based on veterinary advice and organizational needs.