

GLEN ERIN ANIMAL HOSPITAL & MEADOWVALE ANIMAL CLINIC

Subcutaneous Fluids



WHAT ARE SUBCUTANEOUS FLUIDS?

Subcutaneous fluid (SQF) administration is the term used to describe giving fluids into the space under the skin (subcutaneous tissue) from where it can be slowly absorbed into the body. This is a very useful way of providing additional fluids to cats and helping to manage and prevent dehydration.

WHEN TO GIVE?

There are numerous circumstances under which a patient may require SQF. Chronic kidney disease is probably the most common as these patients need extra fluids beyond what they drink to wash dangerous renal toxins through their systems. Sometimes a sick patient will not reliably drink enough water and extra fluid administration is required, or perhaps an oral injury may preclude drinking and thus extra fluids are needed. In any case, if you are reading this, fluids under the skin have probably been recommended for your pet, you have received a demonstration on fluid administration, and this guide is meant as a handy "tip sheet" for when you are on your own at home with your pet.

HOW MUCH TO GIVE?

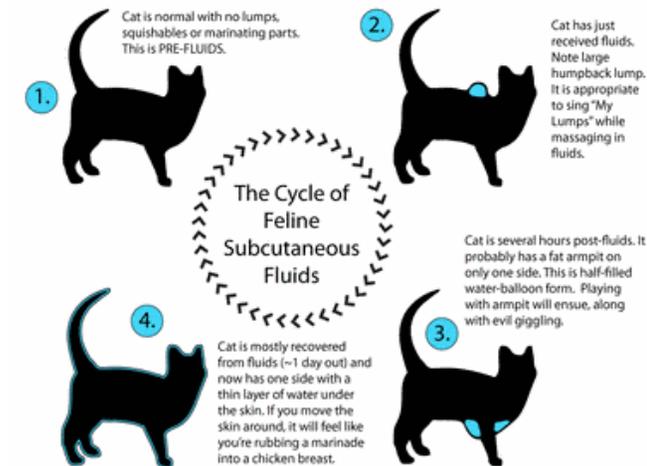
The amount of SQF per injection is based on the cat's weight and the reason for giving. Never give your cat a greater volume of SQF that your vet has specified.

HOW OFTEN TO GIVE?

The frequency can also vary depending on how much the disease has progressed. Some cats can do quite well on SQF once a week while others who are farther along in the disease can benefit from daily injections.

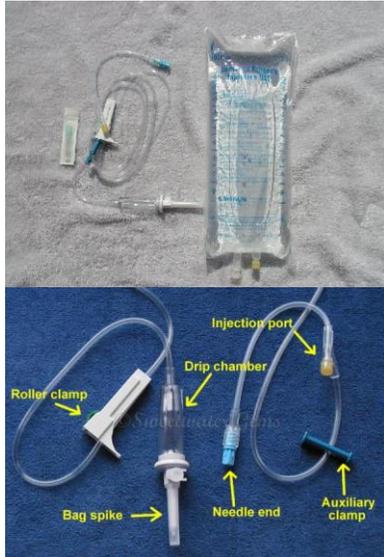
HOW LONG DOES IT LAST?

The injection of SQF may cause your cat to look somewhat lumpy and off-balance for a short time. The cat may carry the water pouch up to 24 hours until it's absorbed. It is normal for fluid (sometimes slightly blood-tinged) to leak from the injection site for a short time. After hydration, the water pouch usually slips down to the bottom of the abdomen, but occasionally it may slip down into one of the front legs.



HOW TO ADMINISTER SUBCUTANEOUS FLUIDS

1. You will need fluids, a drip set, and needles



2. Have a helper hold your pet in a comfortable position, or hold them on your lap or in a laundry basket/bed of some sort so they can't move around too much



3. Hold the bag above the level of the cat, or hang it on a hanger

4. Pull up or 'tent' the skin between the shoulder blades



5. Insert the needle into the tent



6. Unclamp the fluid line so the fluid flows freely, and squeeze the bag to help it along. A fluid pouch will swell under the skin where you are administering fluids. This is normal and will gradually be absorbed. How much fluid you can place in one location depends on the elasticity of your pet's skin. If the area begins to feel tight, remove the needle and administer the remaining fluid in other locations (e.g., a couple of inches away).



7. Once you have given the desired amount close the clamp
8. Smoothly remove the needle from the skin and replace the cap.
9. You are all done! Your pet will have a large 'bubble' or hunch back full of fluid. It is normal for some fluid to leak from the area, don't squeeze it out. It will take a few hours to absorb. It is normal for the fluid bubble to move around and sometimes congregate in one leg for example.

REMEMBER

- ❖ You are not hurting your pet
- ❖ You are helping!
- ❖ Even though they may wiggle and flinch it is probably just from the cool feeling of the fluids, they are not in any pain
- ❖ Please do not throw sharps in the garbage. Bring them in to your vet or pharmacy to be disposed of in a proper sharps container.