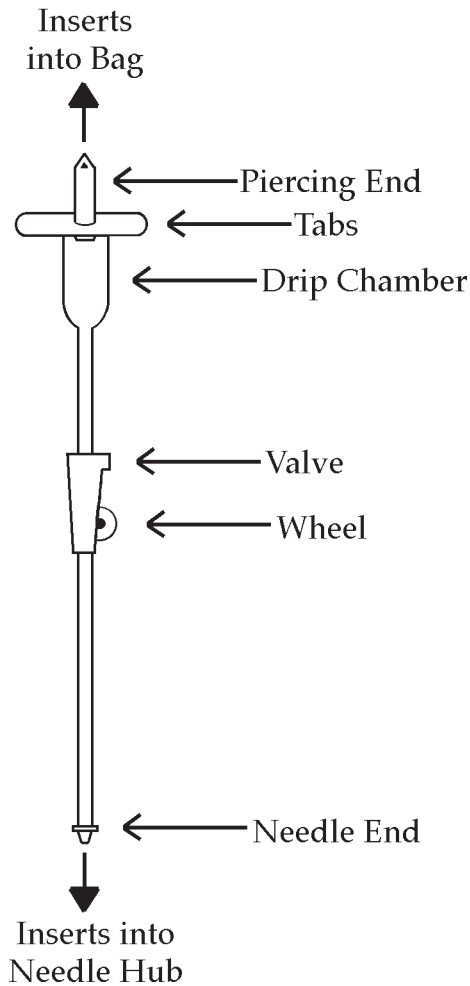


ADMINISTERING SUBCUTANEOUS FLUIDS TO YOUR CAT

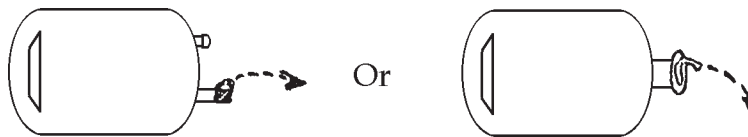
PART I: Preparing the Venoset

The Venoset

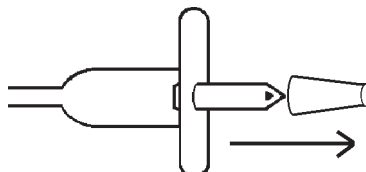


Step 1: Ensure that the wheel of the venoset valve is turned completely down (closed).

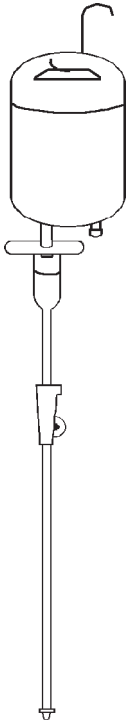
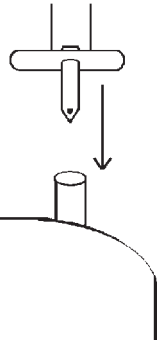
Step 2: Examine your bag of fluids. Gently squeeze the bag to check for pinhole leaks. See if the fluids are cloudy. If you find either of these things discard the bag as it may be contaminated. If your bag is good, proceed by removing the plastic tab from the port of the bag by grasping and pulling it straight off.



Step 3: Remove the protective cap from the piercing end of venoset by pulling it straight off. To preserve sterility, do not touch the exposed tip.



Step 4: Grasp the drip chamber so that the thumb and index fingers are resting against the tabs. Center the piercing end of the venoset in the port and push it in using a slight twisting motion. Continue pushing until the piercing end is completely inside the bag.



Step 5: Using the plastic loop on the bag, hang the bag.

Step 6: Fill the drip chamber with fluid by squeezing the chamber. Repeatedly squeeze until chamber is half full. If you overfill the chamber, invert the bag and squeeze fluid back into the bag.

Step 7: Remove the protective cap from the needle end of the venoset. Do not touch the exposed end. Open the valve by pushing the wheel up. Let fluid run through the tubing until all air is removed. Turn valve off.

Step 8: Pick up a new needle and remove the protective covering from the hub by twisting. Do not touch the exposed hub.

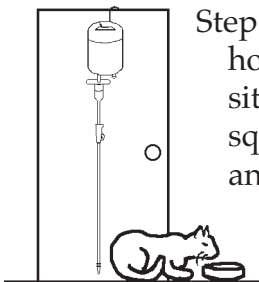


Step 9: Attach the hub of the needle to the needle end of the venoset by gently twisting it on. The venoset is now ready for you to give fluids to your cat.



PART II: Administering the Fluids to your Cat

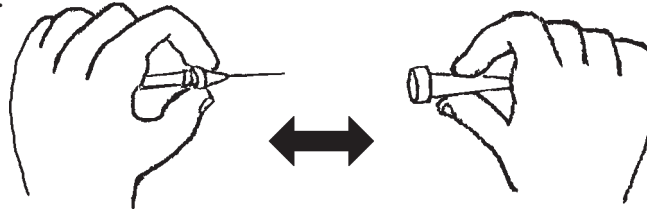
NOTE: Warm fluids first by immersing the bag only (make sure the port stays above the water) in a pan or pitcher of hot tap water for 5-10 minutes. Fluids should be lukewarm. Test the fluids on your forearm as you would for a baby before administering them to your cat.



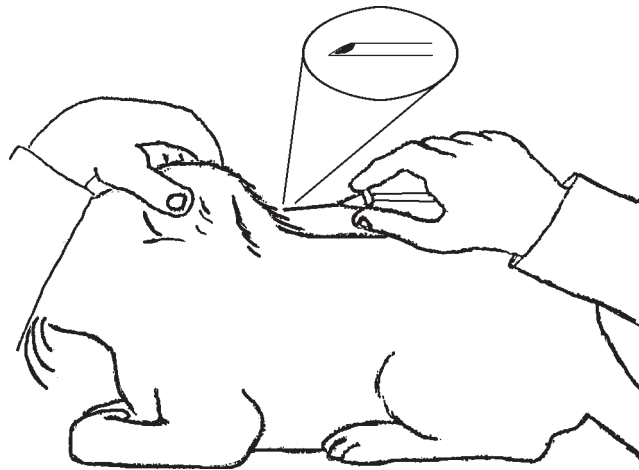
Step 1: Hang fluid bag over a door, door knob or shower rod. Suggestion: use an "S" hook fashioned out of a wire coat hanger and hook over a door. Place cat on counter or sit on the floor with cat in your lap. A variation is to have one person hold (and later squeeze to make the delivery of fluids faster) the bag while the other controls the cat and needle. (With practice and a patient cat this can be done solo.)

Step 2: Make sure your cat is comfortable. Make this a pleasurable experience by giving extra attention or favorite treats.

Step 3: Remove the cap from the needle by grasping the hub in one hand, the cap in the other, and pulling your hands straight apart. **Caution:** as you pull, keep your hands separated to avoid stabbing yourself with the exposed needle. This would not only be painful – it would also contaminate the needle! Set the cap aside.



Step 4: With your free hand, lift the skin between the shoulder blades, forming a tent. With a free finger of the needle holding hand, say the ring or middle finger, push in on the skin near the shoulders to form a pocket. This is where the needle will be inserted.



Step 5: Insert the needle with a quick, steady movement, keeping the needle parallel with the cat's body, and the bevel of the needle up. Open the valve (wheel up). Release the skin between the shoulders. You may have to adjust the position of the needle to get a steady flow of fluids. Make sure the needle did not poke out the other side of the skin tent when you were inserting it, and fluids are leaking on the floor.

Step 6: While administering the fluids you may find it necessary to redirect to the point of the needle a few times to make several "lumps" of fluid under the skin -- e.g. deliver half the fluids over the right shoulder and half over the left. You do not have to take the needle out of the skin to redirect it. In cats that have lost significant weight or cats that have been receiving subcutaneous fluids for some time, this may not be necessary.

Step 7: When the required amount of fluids have been administered, turn the valve off and pull the needle out in a quick, smooth movement. Recap the needle. Some fluid, perhaps pink-tinged, may leak out of the injection site. This is normal. Pinch the area where the needle was between your thumb and index finger for a few seconds to close the site.

Step 8: Your cat may now resume her daily routine. The fluids will be slowly absorbed over the course of several hours. The bolus of fluids might slide down your cat's shoulders into her legs or under her chest. While this looks odd, it is not abnormal.

Check the venoset regularly and replace it every month. The liquid should always appear clear. If there is any cloudiness it may mean the fluids are contaminated. Change the venoset immediately and throw out the contaminated fluids. Your cat has a weakened immune system because of her health problems, and contaminated fluids will only make the condition worse.

Some people advocate keeping the fluids refrigerated between sessions. This is to cut down on the chance of bacterial growth. If you choose to do this, you must warm the fluids before giving them to your cat, and you will want to drain the cold water in the venoset line. Other people see this as a waste of fluids, more labor intensive, and worry about some food item in the fridge getting spilled on the bag. Discuss this matter with your veterinarian to see what they recommend.

How frequently you should you change the needle? It is possible to reuse the needle once or twice, but the needles are really only made for one use; i.e. they dull quickly. While there are fewer nerves in the cat's scruff, they do feel the poking of the needle. A sharper needle will go in more easily. Also, by reusing needles you may run a higher risk of contamination. So, try to buy needles in bulk so they will be cheap enough to throw away after each use. To dispose of your used needles your veterinarian might take them from you or you can save a heavy duty plastic jug (e.g. a laundry detergent bottle) and toss them in there. Once the jug is full, cap, and throw away.

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