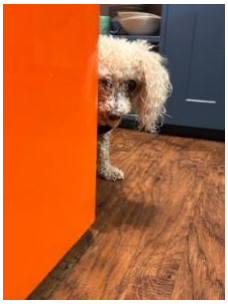
BooBoo’s blobs method

A structured approach for dogs needing multiple tablets or struggling with medication



Getting our dogs to take medication can sometimes be straightforward. At other times it can become very difficult, for example when they need multiple tablets, have to take medication long-term, or become suspicious of food after repeated attempts to hide pills.

I originally developed the Blobs Method for BooBoo, my very nervous, chronically ill rescue dog, when she reached the point of refusing every pill-giving technique I tried. It turned out that this careful, structured approach didn't just help in that crisis. It also became an invaluable way of giving multiple tablets to Skippy when she has an acute episode with an infected paw.

The Blobs Method uses small amounts of tasty, sticky food to create alternating "clean" blobs (without medication) and medicated blobs (with fully enclosed pills). The aim is not simply to get tablets into a dog, but to protect trust, reduce stress and make medication sessions easier for both the dog and their human.

Depending, as ever, on the situation with your dog, you might be able to skip over some of the details and ‘choreography’ of the method. And, as ever, it’s important to check with your vet. But if any of the following ring a bell for you, some of the ideas in this guide may be helpful.

- Your dog needs multiple tablets
- One or more tablets taste bitter
- Your dog is suspicious of tablets hidden in food
- You want a more structured medication routine
- Medication sessions are becoming stressful
- Your dog has started refusing medication

This is quite a detailed document, so if you're short of time, the Key Ideas section provides a quick overview.

Key ideas

1. **The aim is to make medication sessions calm, predictable and positive.**
   The Blobs Method isn't just about getting tablets swallowed. It's about protecting trust and making medication easier for both dog and human.
2. **Balancing taste, smell and size**
   Many dogs are sensitive to the taste, smell or texture of medication. Whole tablets can be easier to disguise than crushed or split ones – but the opposite can also be true! If your vet confirms that a medication can be crushed or split, the Blobs Method should still work because the tasty covering and alternating clean blobs help reduce the impact of unpleasant flavours.
3. **Alternate non-medicated "clean" and medicated blobs**.
   The heart of the method is a sequence of sticky, tasty food blobs, some containing medication and some not. The clean blobs help maintain trust, reduce suspicion and clear lingering tastes.
4. **End every session positively**
   Always finish with one or more clean blobs so the final memory of the session is pleasant and uncomplicated.
5. **Protect the overall system, and the relationship of trust with your dog, not just individual doses**
   A calm, sustainable routine is usually more important than ensuring every pill gets swallowed. But this again needs checking with the vet as it might be that some pills really do need to be swallowed every single time.
6. **If medication starts affecting meals, separate medication from meals**
   This might mean, for example:
   - a different room (e.g. kitchen rather than feeding area)
   - a different surface (floor or plate rather than bowl)
   - a different routine (short, neutral, not framed as a “meal”)

   This separation helps prevent fear or suspicion spreading from medication to food, and allows meals to remain safe, predictable, and enjoyable.
7. **If in doubt, ask your vet**
   Your veterinary team may have alternative formulations, flavours, brands or strategies available. Most vets can give advice over the phone if it isn’t practical for you to get in to see them, and dogs’ difficulties taking pills is very very common. (Apparently cats are even more reluctant!)

Contact your vet!

If you seem to have tried everything but your dog still won’t take their pills, it hardly needs saying but….. the first thing to do is discuss this with the vet. It’s possible there’s a health change, and/or that a different method of giving your dog their pills will work. For example, BooBoo was particularly reluctant to go near her heart medication, Cardisure, however deliciously I coated it with pate, paste etc. Her vets suggested changing the brand to Vetmedin pills and wonderfully, the Vetmedin has a flavour and smell which BooBoo found acceptable. The vet also prescribed, as a safety-net backup, the same medication in liquid form in case BooBoo also didn’t get on with the Vetmedin pills

BooBoo's Blobs method summarised

The Blobs Method transformed a very difficult situation. BooBoo had become increasingly reluctant to take her pills and was even starting to mistrust her meals. Over time, the combination of tasty coverings, careful sequencing and trust-building helped turn medication sessions into happy occasions.

The Blobs Method at a glance

1. Clean blob
2. Medicated blob
3. Clean blob
4. Medicated blob
5. Clean blob
6. Medicated blob
7. Clean blob (always finish on a clean blob)

A few important things I've learned along the way:

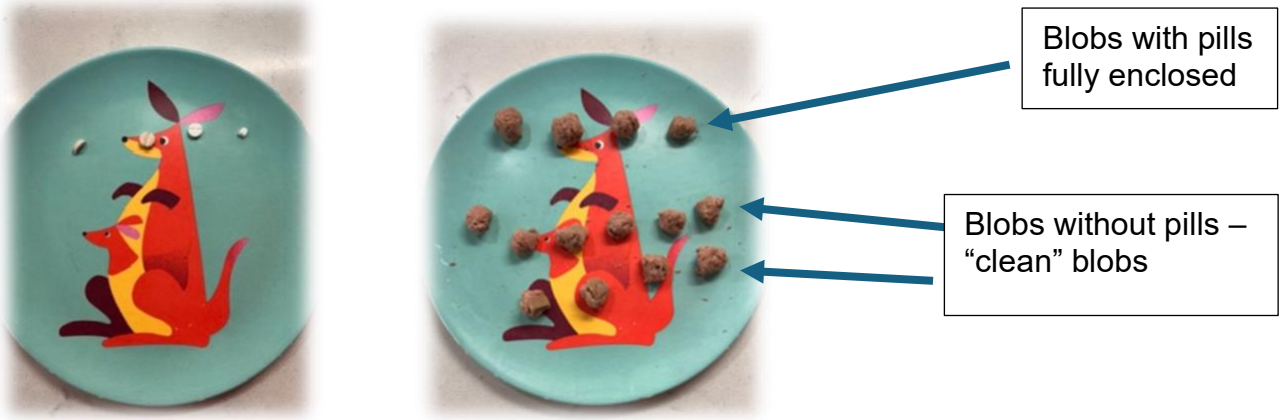
- I know it's essential not to give medicated blobs consecutively. The clean blobs at the start, in between and at the end help maintain enjoyment and reduce suspicion.
- I don't hide multiple tablets in a single blob. Smaller blobs are usually easier to disguise and swallow.
- If a medicated blob is refused, I put it out of the way rather than keep trying. Pushing can quickly turn a calm session into a stressful one. I give the refused pill later, using a different coating.

The full version!

Although the following describes exactly how I used the Blobs Method with BooBoo, she was unusually nervous and wary. The principles remain the same, but you may find it helpful to adapt the process to suit your own dog and circumstances. For example, when Skippy needs multiple pills, it's fine for her to see me prepare the pills and I can hand feed her, whereas BooBoo couldn't be hand fed.

So, with BooBoo:

1. I went in the kitchen and closed the door so BooBoo couldn't see that I was preparing pills. She became so excited about the sessions that she barked til she was let in, which was great.
2. I used a plate with a picture on it which had a clear 'right way up', so I did't get into a muddle with which pills had been taken or rejected as there was:
   - a consistent **start point**
   - a clear **top / bottom**



3. I lined up the pills in the same order each time, and had a note of which pill went where.
4. Each pill got fully enclosed in a delicious sticky food treat, rolled into a neat ball as small as possible. About the size of a big blueberry. (See below for types of food). All the blobs for that session were of the same food/treat covering
5. Under these I lined up blobs of the treat without pills in them – the clean blobs, with a few extra, one for the start and a few for the end
6. I called BooBoo into the kitchen and put down a clean blob on the floor, no pill in it.
7. She wolfed that down and I immediately put down the first medicated blob which she also wolfed down
8. Immediately followed by a clean blob, before she had time to register that there was something lumpy and perhaps strange tasting in the previous one
9. Then medicated blob, then clean blob etc.
10. It was essential to finish with a clean blob or two so that her memory of the session ended with an uncomplicated, happy taste

And now for the granular detail!

When to have the session

BooBoo's pills ideally needed to be given at 12 hour intervals. But as the medication situation had become so challenging, having checked with the vet we decided that even a 6 hour interval was tolerable, to fit in with her appetite and other factors.

When it was broadly time for her medication, I was looking out for, as far as possible:

- BooBoo being awake and chilled but not tired
- BooBoo not having just finished a big meal
- The house being quiet and predictable

Location of the session

Our sessions were in the kitchen because BooBoo didn't have her meals there. She didn't like to be touched so I put the blobs on the floor, one after the other as she ate them, in the clean' blob, medicated blob order. Having them on the floor rather than a bowl or plate also kept the surface stable and helped with the consistent, rather swift rhythm.

The kitchen location turned out to have the added bonus that she hung around there when I was cooking or snacking, waiting for crumbs to fall on the floor. I dropped pieces of cheese, or other treats, for her a few times a day, separate from the sessions, and I think this helped build up her positive associations with the kitchen and small bits of food on the floor.

Sequencing of pills on the plate, and when giving them

If one of the meds was especially bitter, eg because it has to be split so part of the inside of the pill is exposed, I gave that as the last medicated blob because:

- By the time we got to the last medicated blob, she was well into a happy eating rhythm.
- The clean blob before it reset trust and enthusiasm
- The clean blob after it cleared the taste

And then some extra clean blobs to end the session on a happy, memorable note

The flavoured coverings

I rotated the flavours to keep the experience exciting for BooBoo and to stop any build-up of associating one flavour with strange lumps/tastes. The ones I ended up using, because of BooBoo's taste preferences and also the best texture to hold and disguise pills were:

- Arden Grange turkey paste
- Arden Grange salmon paste
- Zealandia pates – eg chicken, beef, salmon

Others I tried which worked for a bit but not long enough included:

- JR pates – too firm, couldn't hold the pill
- Smoked cheddar cheese grated, non-smoked Cheddar – all cheeses! Some she didn't like the taste of and others, eg goats cheese, was too runny
- Cat food chicken terrine

I didn't use liver paste as that was the one BooBoo had previously, successfully, had her meds in but then she stopped being willing to swallow them so they became associated for her with bad things and mistrust.

Also, I kept the strongest tasting/smelling ones in reserve as the "nuclear option", or more positively "ultra treat" coverings, in case she started refusing other ones. These were the hyper-fishy ones – tuna, anchovy paste, sardines.

The distance of the blobs from me

There's an art to this too! It will vary by dog and person giving the blobs but it's about:

- Not too close (feels pressured)
- Not too far (made BooBoo move anxiously and reduced accuracy of placing)

In practice, the really important thing for us was to keep up a swift rhythm so as soon as BooBoo had had one blob, the next one was dropped on the floor near her nose. So I needed to be quite close to her.

Refusing to take one or more of the medicated blobs

At first, even though BooBoo would happily eat most of the medicated blobs, she wouldn't take her Cardisure heart pills. Following the method's principles, I immediately removed the medicated blob she didn't eat. Stopping after one medicated blob refusal prevented:

- pressure and both of us feeling escalating panic
- BooBoo not wanting any of the rest of the blobs and perhaps going off that coating, reducing viable options

Because the blobs were placed in a fixed order on a plate which has a right way up, and I kept a record of this order, I knew which medication was in each medicated blob. So the process then went:

- I removed the medicated blob she wouldn't eat and then continued with the session, starting with a clean blob to reduce suspicion and restart motivation
- followed by the next medicated blob and then another clean blob.
- I waited an hour or so and then put the rejected pill into her favourite covering, one with a different texture from the previous medicated blob. (For example, if it had been salmon paste an hour before, I'd use beef pate.)
- I then had a mini-session consisting of a clean blob, the medicated blob containing the previously refused pill, and several clean blobs.

Ultimately, though, it was changing from Cardisure to a much more tolerably flavoured Vetmedin that smoothed things over. This was a useful reminder that while the Blobs Method can help with many medication challenges, it isn't a substitute for reviewing the medication itself with your vet. You may both conclude that the best solution is to change the medication itself, its formulation or the way it is given.

Involving other dogs

This will very much depend on the particular dogs, how they get on, their behaviour with food etc. At first I found it too confusing and risky to have Skippy in the kitchen during the session, but she started to come in at the end, and I would then give her some treats. This worked so well that I felt able to have her there from the start and fling the same blobs BooBoo was having a few feet away from BooBoo so Skippy ate those while BooBoo was having her blobs. When BooBoo had finished her blobs, they both licked up spare blobs together. I felt it helped BooBoo feel that the situation was safe and also included Skippy in the delicious treats.

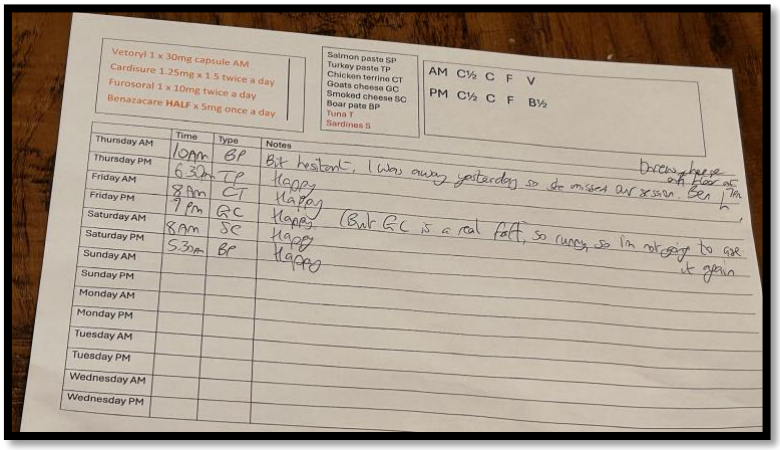
Periodic (eg monthly) medication

Having got into a confident and happy routine with BooBoo's twice daily meds, there were the monthly flea/worm pills to consider. For some reason I went 'old school' and put the Credelio pill in her meal as I'd been doing for several years. But BooBoo wouldn't eat it, making me worried that the whole carefully crafted blobs method could collapse because she could lose trust again, with pills and meals at risk. Instead, I gave the Credelio separately from both her meals and the main blobs session. This experience reinforced for me that not every medication needs to be given in exactly the same way.

Keeping a record

I kept a record of which flavour I'd given BooBoo at what time, so I could make sure I was rotating the flavours. There was also a 'notes' column to record BooBoo's reaction to different flavours, and how effective different ones were at disguising the pills so that BooBoo couldn't see, smell or taste them. The notes also showed what order I lined up the pills, so that if she refused one of them, I knew which it was.

The notes were very scrappy but still a handy record!



Curve balls

A good rule of thumb is that when there are any changes, whether in routine, new format of pills, new pills etc, give the 'top tier' ie favourite flavour covering to maximise the likelihood of your dog happily taking that medicated blob.

One sort of curve ball, for example, is if I ordered new or replacement medication and it came in a format I wasn't expecting eg in a capsule rather than a pill, or liquid. What I found with BooBoo's medication is that capsules could usually be swallowed easily, so could probably be covered with the coating to form a blob in the same way as pills. Some capsules, eg Vetoryl, should not be opened and sprinkled. With liquid, it's possible this can be soaked into another ingredient (eg a meal 'topper' such as Thrive) and then rolled into a blob. As ever, best to consult the vet.

Another hitch is when I had to go away for a day and BooBoo missed an entire meds session, as noted on the chart photographed above. I didn't want to risk derailing a very nuanced, trust-reliant process, nor over-burden the dog-minder by asking him to do the blobs session. Instead, I asked him to throw cheese on the kitchen floor for BooBoo and Skippy about 7PM, the time they usually had an evening blobs session. That way we kept the routine and positive associations going, without the pressure of including the pills. A compromise! (And the mantra…. I checked with the vet first.)

Good luck!! I hope some of this helps.

Acknowledgements

The Blobs Method evolved through trial and error with BooBoo, support from our incredibly patient, compassionate and tenacious team at Stow Vets, and extensive coaching from ChatGPT.

Above all, I would like to acknowledge BooBoo herself. She was a very nervous rescue dog who found many aspects of medication difficult. The method evolved because she kept showing me what did and didn't work, and because she was willing to keep trying new approaches despite her understandable wariness. Her resilience, trust and determination taught me far more than I could have learnt from any book or website.

Special thanks also to salmon paste, which played a deliciously important role, and to Skippy, whose willingness to join in the blob sessions not only helped demonstrate that the method could work in less intense situations but may also have reassured BooBoo that the blobs were safe, desirable and definitely worth eating.

Marion Janner, June 2026