

A Veterinarian's Guide for Capsule Dosing Lizards

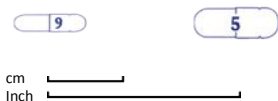
(Western Fence Lizard, *Sceloporus occidentalis*)

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Dosing the western fence lizard with Torpac capsules can be easily accomplished with two individuals; one person to hold the lizard while the other person delivers the capsule. With two experienced technicians, the process of dosing will take < 5 minutes. It is easier for lizards to swallow a #9 capsule. However, lizards as small as 10g can be given a #5 capsule for very large doses. See Table 1 for a guide to dosing lizards of different weights.

Capsule Actual Size



Lizard Weight	Size 9	Size 5
< 10 g	Yes	No
10-15 g	Yes	With experience
>15g	Yes	Yes

Table 1. Guide for selecting capsule sizes based on lizard weight

1. The person holding the lizard gently but firmly grabs the lizard from the back and places the forefinger and thumb just below the jaw to prevent the lizard's head from moving. The forefinger and thumb of the holder's other hand gently pulls on the dewlap of the lizard. The dewlap is a small flap of skin found on the throat that most lizards have. By firmly and steadily pulling on the dewlap, the jaw muscles of the lizard slowly relax and dosing may occur. Relaxation of the jaw is generally very quick (< 1 minute), some lizards may provide more resistance, which may increase the time needed to fully open the jaw up to 2 minutes.

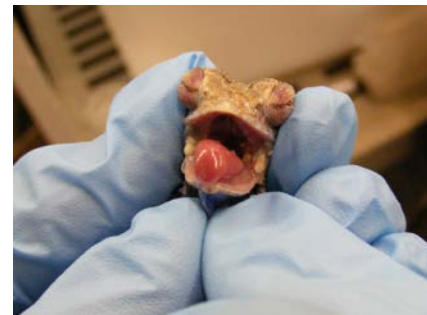


Photo 1. Opening lizard jaw by gently

2. When the mouth is open wide enough, the second person quickly places the capsule in the back of the lizard's throat using forceps (as small as possible). Once the capsule is in the mouth, use the forceps to force the capsule to the back of the throat and apply slight pressure to push the capsule into the esophagus. This last step is essential as it makes it very difficult for the lizard to spit the capsule back out. Lizards are more likely to spit out smaller capsules (#9) especially if the capsules are not placed as far back in the throat as possible.



Photo 2. Insert the Size 9 capsule to the back of the lizard's throat and use the forceps to push it as far back as you can.

3. After delivery of the capsule, have the person holding the lizard keep the lizard's mouth shut by clasping mouth closed, and gently rubbing the throat. Larger capsules can be felt on the outside of the throat. Apply pressure from the top of the capsule down into the esophagus to promote swallowing. It is wise to check that the capsule has been swallowed by again forcing the mouth open and inspecting the back of the throat as in **Photo 1**.

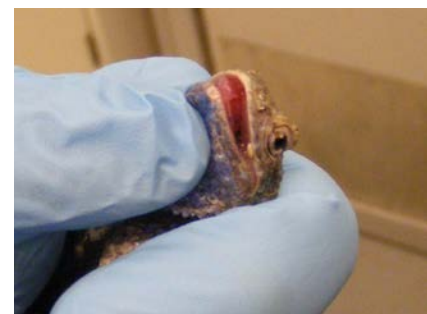


Photo 3. Gently rubbing the throat

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