

# Hate driving your cat to the vet? FDA just approved a drug for that

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If you belong to one of the 46 million American households with a cat, you already know how stressful a trip to the vet can be for your feline—and you.

Rescue might be on the way: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Friday approved a new medicine to help calm cat anxiety.

The pill is called Bonqat, and it's designed "for the alleviation of acute anxiety and fear associated with transportation and veterinary visits in cats," the FDA said in a [news release](#) announcing the approval.

"The drug is administered orally approximately 1.5 hours before the start of the transportation or veterinary visit and can be given on two consecutive days," the agency added.

Bonqat contains pregabalin, a drug that calms overactive nerves. Bonqat is the first FDA-approved drug to contain pregabalin.

According to information from the VCA Animal Hospitals, some cats can develop severe anxiety and motion sickness being transported to the vet's office (or anywhere). Symptoms can range from lots of meowing, lip smacking and drooling, to stress-induced [motion sickness](#) that can trigger urination and defecation in anxious cats.

Medications given before a vet trip might help.

The FDA approval of Bonqat was based on real-world trials conducted by the drug's Finnish maker, Orion Corp. People whose cats had a history of fear and anxiety during veterinary visits were asked to bring their felines to a vet for a [physical exam](#).

In one of the trips, Bonqat was given to the cat prior to the visit.

"A little over half of cats given Bonqat had a good to excellent response during both transportation and the veterinary visit compared to about one-third of cats given placebo," the FDA said. "In addition, 83 of 108 (77%) cats given Bonqat showed improvement in levels of fear and

[anxiety](#) over the course of the two physical examinations, compared to 46 of 101 (46%) cats given placebo."

Some temporary side effects from the drug—mild sedation, lethargy and balance issues—were noted.

Because Bonqat has the potential to be diverted for misuse by people it is being approved as a prescription-only drug, the FDA said.

Pet owners should also take care handling the [drug](#), "including avoiding contact with a person's skin, eyes, and other mucus membranes," the agency said.

**More information:** Find out more about anxiety in cats at the [ASPCA](#).

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