



AnimalTrainingFundamentals.com

WITH BARBARA HEIDENREICH



## Shaping Plan

### Goal Behavior: Intranasal or Throat Swab

Species: Various

Example: Various

Bridging Stimulus: Probably one that does not require hands will be easier.

Preferred Reinforcers: As identified by reinforcer assessment.

By Barbara Heidenreich

- 1. Reinforce for Position:** In this shaping plan since we are trying to access the nose or throat, there are several different position options suggested. One is biting onto something to keep the head in a specific position. Another is resting the chin on something to keep the head in a specific position. You can also use a pipe or funnel to target the head into position. With the biting option, you can also shape this into an open mouth behavior later if desired. You may have other position options that work better for the species you are training. (see photos and images in [course](#) for ideas)
- 2. Reinforce for Duration:** Once the position is understood you will need to build duration. For the throat swab, duration will need to be met until the swab is completed. This is a good goal for the intranasal swab as well, however as you are shaping it you can start with a continuous schedule of reinforcement and work up to a variable interval schedule. Or you can work towards a fixed interval, similar to the throat swab, meaning you will reinforce after the swab is completed instead of intermittently throughout the process.
- 3. Introduce a Dosing Syringe (optional):** If you intend to use medications to numb the nasal passage you may need to introduce a dosing syringe to the nasal cavity. Introducing a syringe to the nasal passage may vary in the difficulty it presents depending on the individual history of the animal. For those animals who show fear responses it can be helpful to use the constructional approach. (You can see

Copyright © 2021 Barbara Heidenreich

Online Education Program [www.AnimalTrainingFundamentals.com](http://www.AnimalTrainingFundamentals.com)

some nice examples of how the constructional approach is applied with objects in [this course](#)) Once you are at a place where you can place the syringe in the nasal passage, you will want to work on duration, movement of the plunger and movement of the syringe in general. Eventually (with permission from your veterinary professional) you may want to attempt addition of a small amount of sterile saline solution. Each time you attempt to introduce a syringe to the nasal passage for training be sure your equipment is sanitized.

- 4. Introduce an Atomizer (optional):** The atomizer will help dissipate the medication throughout the nasal passage. This can make it so that if you are using an anesthetic (or other medications) it saturates the nasal passage well. To introduce the atomizer practice discharging it attached to an empty syringe far enough away from the animal so that the animal notices it but does not react with a fear response. This creates an opportunity to reinforce calm and relaxed behavior. This can be repeated with the atomizer and syringe brought closer with each repetition. The entire process can be repeated with water in the syringe although avoiding getting close enough to spray the animal in the face. Eventually sterile saline can be added to a syringe with the atomizer and small approximations of spraying solution in the nostril before attempting medication.
- 5. Introduce a Swab:** Introducing a swab may be similar to the process used for the dosing syringe. You can also attempt touching the nose with a finger first, then transition to the finger paired with a swab. Then gradually approximate the swab forward. You will then eventually touch the inside of the nasal passage with the swab. Approximations to include will be movement and touching the inside of the nasal passage with more pressure. You will want to use a clean sterile swab with each repetition of this procedure. The swab needs to go far enough into the nasal passage that it meets slight resistance. This may vary depending on the species. Consult with your veterinary professional to determine the approximate distance the swab must be inserted for best results. The swab will need to be moved back and forth several times to collect the sample before removed from the nasal cavity.

#### **General Tips/ideas:**

- Avoid having mammals bite onto metal if possible, to avoid tooth damage.
- Intranasal swabbing may cause sneezing or other reactions to animals showing more sensitivity in the nasal cavity. Consider throat swabs for these animals.
- If proceeding with the intranasal swab be sure the swab has no loose threads to cause irritation and press gently but firmly.
- The intranasal swab should not be painful to the animal when done correctly.
- Studying anatomy charts of the nasal cavity in advance of the species you are training can be helpful.
- Always use a sterile swab on each repetition of insertion into the nasal cavity or throat.

- If using an anesthetic: If possible, try to at least have fluids be at room temperature before introduced into the nasal passage to reduce the likelihood they will create an unpleasant sensation. If they can be close to the animal's body temperature that is likely even better.
- Remember we are not trying to sneak medications (or swabbing) into the animal. The goal is for the animal to see each step and allow it. This may mean small approximations at first for some animals in order to get to voluntary participation.
- If this behavior is trained well, keep in mind intranasal is also a great way to deliver other medications (such as sedatives like Midazolam) If you have an animal that does not do well with injections this can be another option for you.
- Check with your veterinary professional to see if medication can be delivered intranasally without an atomizer.