

# Helping Your Child Take Medicine

Learning to take medicine can be hard for kids. Here are some ways to help your child learn:

## Pill Swallowing

### Tips

- Be relaxed. The more relaxed you are as a teacher, the more relaxed your child will be.
- You should only practice for 30 minutes or less at a time.
- Stop if your child gets frustrated and try again later.
- Show your child how you swallow a pill.
- Have your child chew a cracker and spit it out on a napkin. This shows your child how much they swallow when they eat and that the size of a chewed up cracker is larger than most pills.
- A sticker chart can be helpful. After your child swallows a pill, give your child a sticker. Find a sample at [stickersandcharts.com](http://stickersandcharts.com).

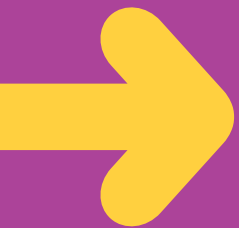


### When it's time to swallow a pill, have your child:

- Choose what to drink. Water or juice are usually good choices.  
**Always check the instructions on your child's medication or ask your pharmacist if there are any drinks that should not be used with your child's medicine.**
- Sit up straight.
- Take a deep breath and relax.
- Take a drink before putting the pill on the tongue.
- Put the pill on the back of the tongue.
- Take a drink.

### Other ideas you can try if your child has trouble swallowing a pill:

- Put the pill in the freezer for a few minutes. This may help if the pill has a bad taste.
- Have your child suck on an ice cube or a popsicle before trying to swallow a pill. This helps numb your child's taste buds and makes it easier for the pill to slide down your child's throat.
- Coat the outside of the pill:
  - Use Hershey's Magic Shell® ice cream topping to coat the pill. Put the Magic Shell® on the pill and put it in the freezer for a minute. It should be cold and taste like chocolate. Make sure your child doesn't try to chew it!
  - Use a Fruit Roll-Up® to cover the pill. Spread a small piece of the Fruit Roll-Up® over the pill to make a thin coat on the pill before your child tries to swallow it.
- Have your child swallow part of a Jell-O Jiggler® with the pill inside. Make a pan of Jell-O Jigglers®. Make a small slit in the Jell-O®, and add the pill inside.



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## Pill Swallowing Practice

You should always explain to your child that the medicine they are taking is not candy. But, in some cases, practicing with different sized candy can help your child become more comfortable swallowing a pill. Start with small candy and work up to larger candy. Here are some examples:

1. Sprinkles
2. Cake dots or slightly larger sprinkles
3. Mini M&M's®
4. Tic Tacs®
5. Regular M&M's®
6. Mike and Ikes®
7. Lemonheads®

Show your child only one size candy at a time.

If you reach a candy size your child is unable to swallow, go back to the last candy size your child swallowed. Have your child swallow that size again to end the session with your child feeling successful.

## Crushing or Mixing Pills

**Talk with your pharmacist before crushing, freezing or changing any pill in any way!**

### Ideas to try if your pharmacist says it is okay:

- Crush pills and place them in a small amount of food the child likes (applesauce, ice cream, etc.). Make sure your child eats all of the food.
- Mix crushed pills with chocolate syrup. It can hide the taste very well.
- Melt Starburst® fruit chews in the microwave to soften. Then, place crushed pills inside.
- Mix crushed pills in jelly and have your child swallow a spoonful.
- Mix crushed pills in a sweet fruit drink, orange juice or cranberry concentrate.

## Liquid Medicine

- Have your child drink a soda before and after taking their medicine.
- Mix the medicine with chocolate syrup. It can hide the taste very well.
- Ask your pharmacy if they have special flavoring to add to liquid medicine to make it taste better.
- A sticker chart can be helpful. After your child swallows the medicine, give your child a sticker. Find a sample at [stickersandcharts.com](http://stickersandcharts.com).