



Pill Swallowing Tips and Tricks

Considerations

- Does your child want to swallow pills? Swallowing pills is a skill that needs to be practiced. Consider modeling the behavior for your child and explain benefits of being able to swallow on their own (i.e., time, resources, discreteness at school)

At Home Practice and Considerations

- Create a pill swallowing kit (allow your child to decorate a container to their interests, this creates ownership)
- Work out alternative medication plan for the time being
- Decide on goal
- Gradual size increase with pieces of candy (similar shape, with gradual size increase)
**Candies that we commonly use are: sprinkles, Nerds, Mini M&M's, Tic-Tacs, cinnamon hearts, Rockets, Smarties, Mike and Ikes.
- Discuss self-doubt
- Set up schedule and plan with rewards
- To move onto next pill size, suggest accomplishing swallowing that size 3 times. If they are having difficulty with a size, take a break and come back to it another time/day or go back to the previous size to gain confidence.
- Practice! It is a skill, and it takes time to learn how to swallow pills.

Techniques/ Tips to Help

- Be sensitive (ex. I understand I am asking you do a very grown-up thing...)
- Involve child in plan
- Acknowledge children's feelings.
- Make medicine taste better, follow up with a tasty treat if it cannot mix with food (Try having a Freezie before to numb your tongue to the taste).
- Allow for choice – ex. Drink (carbonated may help)
- Use a straw (ex. "fun" straws from the dollar store)
- Place at back of tongue, keep tongue flat.
- Tilt head downward first to open airway and then backward to swallow, but not back too far, this can cause the adverse and close the throat.
- Try different ways of movement in your mouth, make a boat with your tongue and place pill back further in your mouth (look in a mirror to see the back of your tongue).
- Put your finger on your nose and stare at it, then swallow.
- Don't give up! You will get there; make small steps that work for you.



Long Term Benefits of Learning the Skill

- Sense of empowerment
- Feeling of control
- Increased esteem
- Self- recognition
- Personal motivation