

Learning to Swallow a Pill



SPRINKLES

Start by having your child swallow a sprinkle with a small sip of water.



SMALL CANDY

Next, have them swallow a small candy with water. Using a straw may help.



APPLESAUCE

Try placing the candy on the top of a pouch and sucking it up with applesauce.

Learning to swallow pills may feel scary for a child but it is an important skill to learn. While many children's medications are available in chewable or liquid form, some are only available in pill form. Below are tips on when and how to teach your child to swallow pills.

Timing

There isn't a magic age at which your child needs to learn to swallow a pill, but most kids can safely learn if needed when they are 6-8 years old. Always reference the appropriate [dosing table](#) to ensure the correct medication dose and strength is used.

What to Do

Remember to stay calm and positive when teaching your child a new skill. Acknowledge that it may take time and practice before they are able to easily swallow pills.

Practice with small candy:

- Remind your child that sugar melts in their mouth so it will dissolve if they can't swallow it
- Start with very small candy, such as sprinkles
- Have your child place a sprinkle in their mouth and swallow it using a small sip of water
- Drinking the water through a straw may help propel the pill toward the back of their throat, making it easier to swallow
- Once they are able to swallow a sprinkle, move on to something slightly larger such as a Tic Tac or mini M&M
- If they are comfortable swallowing a small candy this way, they should be prepared to swallow necessary medication

No luck? Try an applesauce pouch:

- If your child is having difficulty using water to swallow the candy or medicine, try an applesauce pouch to help them swallow the candy
- Place a mini M&M on the mouthpiece of an applesauce pouch
- Have your child suck up the applesauce and swallow the candy
- Once they can swallow a mini M&M, try a regular sized M&M
- If they are comfortable swallowing a small candy this way, they should be prepared to swallow necessary medication