

## Pill Swallowing

Learning how to swallow pills can be difficult. Up to 26% of children may struggle with swallowing pills. Being able to successfully and safely swallow a pill may increase the effectiveness of medication dosing and improve convenience. Not all medications that are prescribed are available as liquids or are able to be crushed.

### How Can I Help Myself?

**Precaution:** Never use actual medication to build pill swallowing skills.

**Patience:** It can be easy to get frustrated or discouraged, but have patience with yourself.

**Practice:** Just like any other skill, swallowing a pill takes practice. Start small, even just practicing swallowing and build up with candy. Tic Tacs or Good & Plenty are good options.

### Pill Swallowing Methods

1. Watch someone else show you how they swallow, with or without water. Have them give specific instructions as they go, such as placing the candy on their tongue. Next, try to repeat their actions yourself!
2. Place the candy on your tongue, swish a medium mouthful of water around in your mouth, and swallow the water once you can no longer locate the candy in your mouth. This method is helpful if your tongue tends to trap pills at the roof of your mouth.
3. Challenge someone, your parents, brother, cousin, etc., to drink a cup of water faster than you. Place the candy on your tongue, then chug the water without stopping and try to finish first! This method is helpful if you tend to overthink swallowing pills.

### How Can I Help My Child Practice?

**Repetition is key!** Schedule practice several times a day until your child has mastered the skill. Build up to bigger candies.

**Provide encouragement!** Give positive praise and be encouraging, learning this skill takes time. Congratulate your child when they are successful, even if it was by accident!

**Practice together!** The more your child practices, pill swallowing generally becomes easier. Try practicing together as a family to motivate your child.

**Take breaks!** If your child becomes too frustrated; take a break and try again later.

**Be confident!** If you display worry, your child will be more likely to be worried too.