



# Coping with Medicine Taking

## What is it?

Medicine taking is necessary to help us feel better and stronger. However, it is not always easy, especially for children. It is normal for them to feel uncomfortable about it and it's ok. Did you know though there are ways to help make this process a little easier? Let's find out how...

### Reasons for non-compliance to medication taking at home/ in school

### What can we do to make it better?



Unsure of its benefits



- \* Explain in simple terms why medicine is needed and how it will help. Seek doctor's help to start this.
- \* Pretend play with dolls can be useful for younger children.



Lack of choice



- \* Avoid getting into a physical struggle with your child.
- \* Bring up the subject with a simple choice. Instead of saying 'Time to take your medicine,' say 'Would you like orange or apple juice to take your tablet with today?' or 'Do you want your medicine while playing a game or while watching tv?'



Fear of teasing or bullying, or worries about what others will think



- \* Talk to the teacher or school nurse to see if there is somewhere they can give the medicine in private.
- \* Explain how everyone is different and it's ok! (e.g. kids at school who wear glasses, kids with asthma inhalers, etc.)



Forgetfulness



- \* Ensure there is someone who can remind them. Setting an alarm can also be helpful.
- \* If your child forgets a dose, never double the next one. Check in with your doctor/ nurse/ pharmacist.



Dislike of the medicine's taste or texture



- \* Ask child to put a little liquid in his/ her mouth, and then pop in the tablet or capsule.
- \* Give medicine with food to mask unpleasant taste, e.g., honey, jam or yogurt.
- \* Keep liquid medication cold to make it more palatable.
- \* Try coating your child's tongue with a lolly or asking him/her to suck on some ice popsicles BEFORE taking the medicine. Rinse/ wash mouth AFTER medicine taking.



Difficulty swallowing tablets or capsules



- \* Crush tablets to dissolve in some drinks and/or food like juices, puddings, etc.  
*Do check with staff nurse/doctor/pharmacist before doing this.*
- \* Allow child to swallow tablets with a thicker liquid, e.g., fruit smoothie, milkshake or yogurt drink.
- \* Talk to your child and try to find fun ways of making it easier e.g., swallowing a few gummy bears for practice before swallowing the tablet.

## Do's and Don'ts for Parents

### Do's

- × Be understanding and use a gentle, but firm, approach. Ensure the environment is calm and relaxed.
- × Remain calm if your child refuses to take their medicine. Count to ten, take a break and come back to it five minutes or half an hour later. Try getting someone else to take over if you need help.
- × Try incorporating medicine taking into the family's daily routine. Set a time and place.
- × Give rewards such as stickers as encouragement.
- × Praise your child when he/she starts to show improvement. This will build self-esteem and motivate your child.

### Don'ts

- × Force your child to take the medicine.
- × Add medicine to your child's food or drink without his knowledge.
- × Pretend the tablets are sweets.
- × Make taking medicine seem like a punishment.
- × Engage in a physical/ power struggle with your child.
- × Please avoid restraining/ pinning your child down as this will overwhelm and increase his/ her anxiety with medicine taking.

If you want to learn more, ask your doctor/nurse to give the Child Life Therapist a call when you are staying in the hospital!

## Video links explaining Medicine Taking



### Tips for Swallowing Pills

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnW36kEW40k&ab\\_channel=Dana-FarberCancerInstitute](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnW36kEW40k&ab_channel=Dana-FarberCancerInstitute)



### Teaching Your Child to Swallow Pills

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZO\\_xjFh-D0&ab\\_channel=HamiltonHealthSciences](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZO_xjFh-D0&ab_channel=HamiltonHealthSciences)

#### Resources:

<https://treepik.com>, <https://flaticon.com>,  
<http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/adhd/howdoigetmychildtotaketheirmedicine.htm>,  
[http://www.pbs.org/opb/childrenshospital/parents/pop/pop-ts\\_medicine.htm?500](http://www.pbs.org/opb/childrenshospital/parents/pop/pop-ts_medicine.htm?500),  
<http://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/>