



## Pill Swallowing Tips

Medicine is important to help bodies heal and may be a necessary part of a treatment plan. Pill swallowing is a lifelong skill that may take longer to learn for some than others. There is no right or wrong way to swallow pills. Practice sessions should be positive and encouraging.

### Helpful Tips:

- Start a pill swallowing program only when your child is ready and understands the purpose for swallowing pills.
- Candy may be used for pill swallowing practice sessions.
- Decide together on a goal for each session. (for example, a goal can be the size of candy)
- Acknowledge any doubts and/or fears.
- Try to provide your child with appropriate choices, such as allowing them to choose which drink or soft food to use to swallow the candy or pill (i.e. JELL-O®, pudding, applesauce, ice cream, yogurt, juice, Sprite®, chocolate milk).

### Practice Sessions:

- Use novelty items, such as crazy straws or a favorite cup.
- Celebrate all successes and attempts.
- Use a similar shaped candy to model the actual pill.
- Start very small and slowly increase the candy size.
  - Sprinkles (tiny circles, flat circles, sphere shape)
  - M&M's® minis, regular size M&M's®, Sixlets®, or Skittle<sup>ss</sup>® for round pills
  - TicTac®, jelly beans, Mike and Ike® for capsule-shaped pills
- Start with the smallest candy and as they accomplish one size move up to the next.
- Always start and end on a successful attempt by your child.



### Pill Swallowing Technique:

- Start by taking a normal drink of liquid and swallow.
- Place a pill/candy towards the middle to back part of the tongue, to make it easier to move the pill down the throat.
- Take a drink of liquid and swallow; do not limit the amount of liquid (take 2, 4, or 12 drinks if necessary).
- Tilting of the head can help swallow the pill/candy. (tilting head back, left or right side or tilt head down)