



JUST A SPOONFUL OF SUGAR HELPS THE MEDICINE GO DOWN

When kids are sick, often, all they need is a positive parental attitude, loads of tender, loving care (TLC), and even more patience. Unfortunately though, medicines are often not only helpful to improving their symptoms, like Acetaminophen for fever, but truly crucial to restoring their health, like steroids for asthma or antibiotics for bacterial infections. That's when the battle and the tears begin. So what can you do when your child refuses to take the medication you know he/she needs? Here are few tricks you may find useful in order to persuade your child:

1. **Smile, smile and smile again.** The more frustrated you look, the more resistant the child will get. So play the cheerful part well.
2. **Try a syringe instead of a spoon.** This allows small squirts instead of a mouthful.
3. **Break it up.** Give smaller amounts of medicine over several minutes instead of all at once. It may seem as prolonging the agony, but some kids would rather choose this instead of downing it all in one gulp.
4. **Hide the taste.** Ask the doctor or the pharmacist if it's okay to hide a specific medicine in foods or drinks, or if a tablet or capsule can be crushed or opened. Mix the medicine with a small amount of applesauce, honey, chocolate syrup, ice cream, yogurt, or fruit juice. But remember, if you do mix the meds into something else, your child needs to eat or drink the whole thing in order to get the complete dose.
5. **Offer a bribe.** Promise your child a small but special prize in return for taking her medicine. Stickers, ice cream or lollipops may sometimes do the trick.
6. **Let her decide.** Empower the child by allowing her to choose between different flavors (FLAVORx) that may be added to the medicine at the pharmacy, for a small fee
7. **Explain how medicine helps kids get well.** Young children don't always understand how medicine works. You could say: "This medicine will help you feel better so you can go back to the playground", or, for older kids, you could remind them about a coming up party or sleep over that they may miss if not well by then.
8. **Show some tough love for a legitimate reason.** When all the above fail, kids can be restrained with the help of an extra caregiver. Hug the child gently, wrapped in a blanket and sited on your lap, and have the helper give the medicine. Often kids may be more willing to take medicine from someone other than a parent.

Call us for advice if you have tried it all to no avail. Keep in mind that very few illnesses can be actually cured with a shot, and that more often than not, that one shot will hurt more than all the "suffering" involved in the methods above.

ELLENTON PEDIATRICS PREFERRED METHODS

On the bottom of a cup, mix the required volume of medicine with about three times that much of cold orange juice or soda (the bubbles hide the taste), stir it well, draw the mix into a syringe, and give it little by little in the lower gum pocket till it's all gone. For example, if a child needs to take 5 ml of Amoxicillin, add to it 10 ml of orange juice and follow the steps above.

For tablets that can be crushed and capsules that can be opened and sprinkled, placing the resulting powder into a spoon coated with chocolate syrup or honey may help it all go down easier. Both methods worked on our kids every time. Some chasing around, bribing and TLC may still be required. Keep it fun!



TEACHING KIDS HOW TO SWALLOW PILLS

Things to have on hand before learning to swallow pills:

- - Small Dixie® cups or equivalent
- - Candies of different increasing sizes (cupcake sprinkles, Nerds®, mini M&M's®, regular M&M's®, Good 'N Plenty®)

STEP 1: Ask the child to swallow a sip of water and then praise the child. Make sure not to let your child swish the water in their mouth.

STEP 2: Starting with the smallest candy, place the candy towards the back of the tongue and let it dissolve.

STEP 3: Place the smallest candy on the tongue and then take a sip of water and swallow the candy.

STEP 4: Once successful with steps 1-3, move on to the next candy size. This does not all have to happen at one time. It may take a few days or weeks for the child to build up their confidence. Each session should last about 5-10 minutes and should be fun.

STEP 5: Once the child successfully swallows the candy sizes (you should aim for the last candy size being similar in size to the pill), they can try the actual pill. You may also try to cut or chop the pill in halves/quarters (check with pharmacist if this is okay) first.

If the child has difficulty swallowing, here are some fun tips:

- Insert the pill in a spoonful of Jell-O® or pudding and let it slide down your child's throat. Have your child practice swallowing spoonfuls of the food without the medicine first.
- Dip the gel cap in ice water before swallowing to make the coating very slippery.
- Tear off a piece of Fruit Roll-Ups® or melt Starburst® candy in the microwave for 10-15 seconds to wrap around the pill prior to swallowing.

