

Pill-Swallowing

1. Tell the child that they are going to learn a new skill. Remind them that they have learned other skills in the past (e.g., skipping, dressing, eating)
2. Do not bargain or bribe the child to take medication. Bargains or bribes will likely cause the child to take medication to earn a reward rather than because it is a habit, an expected part of growing up, and/or good for their health.
3. Do not mix with food or otherwise try to “trick” the child. Do not threaten or punish.
4. **Always** separate the child from the parents to learn pill-swallowing. Have the parent show confidence in the child’s ability—coach parents beforehand to just show enthusiasm
5. Use short commands and be repetitive
 - a. Sit up straight
 - b. Keep your head straight
 - c. Put the pill on your tongue
 - d. Drink the water/juice
4. The trainer models the behavior for the child with the smallest placebo
 - a. The trainer places the pill on her tongue and drinks water
 - b. The trainer shows the child that her mouth is empty and the pill is swallowed
5. The child then practices the behavior
 - a. Child should determine if the trainer or child will take the pill first in the training session
 - b. The child should not see the pills before taking them
 - c. **Never** refer to the pill as candy
 - d. If the pill goes down the trainer should praise the child
 - e. After a successful trial the trainer should move quickly to the next size pill. The trainer should say “next pill” **never** “bigger pill” or “harder pill”
 - f. If the pill does not go down, try not to let the child remove the pill from their mouth. Trainer says, “that is okay, keep drinking” The trainer should be quiet to allow the child to calmly swallow water.
 - g. Try not to allow the child to remove the pill from their mouth if at all possible. If child persists the trainer should allow the child to remove the pill from their mouth.
 - h. The trainer should end the session with a success on either a smaller pill or water.
 - i. Praise the child for effort—not outcome