



## How to Help...Your Child Take Medicine

Having a child take medicine by mouth is not always an easy task; in fact having a child take medicine by mouth and having the situation remain positive and encouraging can seem, at times, impossible. Below are some ideas to help encourage children to take their oral medication while providing them with a sense of control.

- Always prepare your child in advance when they need to take medicine by mouth.
- Children are sensitive to the environment and emotions of others. They will quickly sense if you are expecting a lack of cooperation. Remain positive and encouraging.
- Use play to help your child practice by encouraging them to give "medicine" to a doll or stuffed animal with an empty syringe or medicine cup.
- When possible, give choices. (i.e. what would they like it mixed with, what would they like to drink before/after, how would they like to take it...in a cup, in a syringe).
- Encourage the child to hold onto a security item.
- To partially numb the taste buds, have the child suck on a Popsicle right before giving the medication.
- Mixing medicine with a flavoring such as Kool-aid powder, chocolate syrup or maple syrup may mask a strong taste.
- Chalky liquids often taste better by mixing them with chocolate or vanilla ice cream (always in amounts the child is guaranteed to finish).
- Have your child "chase" the medicine with a favorite beverage such as juice, soda or chocolate milk. White grape juice is great for masking a bitter taste.
- Having your child "chase" the medicine with something sweet such as a couple of jelly beans or a lollipop can also be helpful. Letting them pick which candy flavors they want is another way to increase control.
- To lessen the strong taste of a medicine, coat your child's tongue by giving a spoonful of peanut butter or maple syrup before giving the medicine.
- Crushed pills can often be mixed in food items such as applesauce, yogurt, sherbet, pudding or ice cream. These items slip down the throat easily and don't require chewing. Have the child try swallowing a small amount of the food item without chewing before adding the medication.
- Crushed pills also can be mixed in a small amount (1/4 cup) of orange or grape juice and followed with a beverage of the child's choice.
- Insert whole pills into a spoonful of Jell-o, pudding or jelly and have it slide down the child's throat.
- Place smaller pills inside a Junior Mint candy. The mint masks the taste, and the chocolate allows for easier swallowing or tear off a piece of fruit roll-up or melt Starburst candy in the microwave for 10-15 seconds and wrap around the pill prior to swallowing.
- Once the medicine is taken, offer your child praise for their efforts and discuss how things may be done better next time.