



Medication Administration Tips

With the shortage of pediatric formulations of some medications, it may be necessary to administer adult formulation medications in their original or altered form. Here are some tips to manage this:

Swallowing adult medications whole ⁽¹⁻⁵⁾:

If appropriate, encourage the child to try swallowing the medication whole. These suggestions may help:

- Have them practice swallowing. Start with small things like edible cake decorations, increasing in size up to larger candies such as M&M's or whatever is about the same size as the medication needed. For more information on this and instructions to play the helpful children's "Pill Swallowing Challenge Game" see the McMaster Children's Hospital: [Help your child learn to swallow pills](#)
- Mix the medication with a small amount of soft food such as yogurt, jello, applesauce, banana, peanut butter or chocolate syrup.
- Put pill or capsule inside a gummy candy or mandarin orange slice.
- For bad-tasting medications, put inside an empty gel capsule.
- Try 'PillGlide' ^{3,6}. This is a flavored spray which coats the tongue and throat to help mask the smell and taste of medications and makes swallowing them easier.
- Have the child stand up while administering.
- Put medication under the tongue and have them take a drink with a straw.
- Use a special cup, for example, the 'Oralflo' ⁷ cup. The liquid sits in a cup and the lid holds the medication in a specially designed spout. When child drinks from it, the medication and liquid are swallowed together.
- Give a drink before they try swallowing the medication. A dry mouth or throat can prevent swallowing.

Administering crushed/opened medications:

References to help determine whether medications can be crushed/opened:

- Clinical Resource, Meds That Should Not Be Crushed. Pharmacist's Letter/Prescriber's Letter. January 2020. (subscription)
- Lexicomp - Oral medications that should not be crushed or altered. (subscription).
- ModifyMeds.ca - Available from <http://www.modifymeds.ca/base-de-donnees/>. Free access.

If the medication can't be taken whole and it has been determined the tablet or capsule can be crushed or opened, here are some tips to mask potential bad taste/odor :

- Mix with a small amount of soft food or drink. If the volume is too large, the child may not eat or drink the full amount and won't receive a complete dose.
 - Chocolate, salty, sweet, or sour flavors are useful to mask bitter flavors. Chocolate syrup or puddings, yogurt, jello, applesauce, banana, peanut butter, or fruit juice are good choices.
 - Salty foods help mask sour medications.
 - Mint or spicy flavors can be useful to mask other bad flavors.
 - Lemon and bubble gum flavors are aromatic and can mask foul smelling medications.
 - Follow these mixtures with an unmedicated portion of the food/drink or another strong flavored food/drink to help clear the medication from the mouth.
- If mixed with liquid, administer with a syringe or dropper. For proper technique see <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/conditions/a-z/medicine-refusal-to-take/>
- Numb the tastebuds by giving ice, a popsicle, or other frozen treat before administering the medication.
- Have the child pinch their nose when swallowing.
- A compounding pharmacy may be able to provide a taste-blocking product in which to mix the crushed/opened medication.
- Please note: Do not crush or open the medication or mix with food or drink until directly before use. Otherwise, the medication may lose strength or deteriorate.

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