

# Tough to get your kid to take medicine? An expert offers tips

August 1 2022

---



Sometimes it's difficult for parents to get their child to take necessary

medication.

One [expert](#) who spends part of her workday guiding parents through this challenge offers some suggestions to make the ordeal easier.

Emily Glarum, a [child](#) life specialist at the Heart Institute at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, offers these tips: Be honest, practice it, provide choices, set a schedule and let the child take little sips or use a straw.

"We like to [promote honesty](#)," Glarum said in a hospital news release. "Hiding medicine in [food](#) can make kids feel tricked and add some mistrust or even some aversions around different foods.

"What I've run into in the past is, the child may start to detect that their medicine has been mixed in with foods, and then they might stop eating that food altogether, or be more mindful of the food they're eating and think, 'Oh, are they mixing medicine in with it?'" she said.

While Glarum recommends not trying to hide medication in food, if kids prefer the medicine mixed into a food or drink, that's OK as long as they know about it.

"Make sure children are aware of it and be honest about why they need the medicine in a way they can understand. For example, something like, 'We're trying to help your knees feel better with this,' or 'We're trying to help your stomach feel better,'" she said. "Especially if it's a medicine they have to take long-term, that can help them establish some understanding and control over it."

Start and stick to a consistent "medicine time" schedule, Glarum suggested.

Offer choices when it works to do so. For example, let your child choose

to receive liquid medication through a dropper or a cup. Or allow the choice of water or juice to wash down a pill. Medication times may also be a bit flexible, such as letting your child choose whether to take the dose before or after a bath.

Make time to practice taking a medication, especially if switching from liquids to pills. A fear of choking can be one hurdle, Glarum said. She has a child practice with smaller-sized candy, and then build up to something that approximates the size of the pill.

"For example, if we have a pill that's the size of a Skittle, then you would start with something smaller, like little dot-sized sprinkles or Nerds," Glarum said. "From there we can move up to mini M&Ms, regular-sized M&Ms, and Skittles, all the way to Mike and Ikes, which are about the size of a standard tablet."

This helps them build their comfort level, she noted.

If your child dislikes the taste of a liquid medicine, you might let them sip it in small portions, then chase each mini-dose with a bit of water or a drink they like.

Offer a little reward between doses, such as working on a coloring book or putting a Lego block onto a structure, Glarum said.

An alternative for a child who doesn't want to sip liquids to wash down medicine is to use a straw. It can provide a good distraction and create a force strong enough to wash down a pill quickly.

"It helps give them a little more confidence," Glarum said, "because it's going down easier."

For an infant, you could use a syringe and deposit drops between the

baby's cheek and tongue, allowing each droplet to be swallowed until the full dose gets down.

**More information:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration offers more tips for [getting kids to take their medicine](#).

Copyright © 2022 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Tough to get your kid to take medicine? An expert offers tips (2022, August 1) retrieved 24 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-08-tough-kid-medicine-expert.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.