



How to swallow pills

Swallowing pills can be difficult and frustrating for kids. Sometimes they just can't get the pill to go down, even when it's cleverly disguised in applesauce or yogurt. Maybe it makes them gag. Either way, having to swallow pills often causes anxiety - another worry that kids with IBD just don't need.

The good news... Dr. Bonnie Kaplan and her students at the University of Calgary have worked with patients at the Alberta Children's Hospital to find a new way of swallowing pills that they want you to try.

Tested in four different studies and already adopted by a number of people, this technique takes only a few minutes to learn and practice.



Try this:

1. Sit with your shoulders back or stand up tall; good posture is important.
2. Practice swallowing small sips of water with your head facing left, right, up, down and centre. When you move your head to the sides, your esophagus (the tube that takes food to your stomach) opens wide, making it easier for pills to slide down. If you hear a noise in your throat when you sip the water, you're doing it right.
3. Practice with a small candy, like an M&M Mini or Tic Tac. Put it right at the back of your tongue and take just a small sip of water (larger gulps will move the candy to your cheeks).
4. Move your head to face either left, right, up, down or centre, as before, and swallow. Try this once a day for two weeks with your head in a different position each time. Swallowing may feel easiest with your head to the side one day and up the next.
5. Rate the head position each day to figure out what feels best and is easiest for you.

Dr. Kaplan talks about using the "duck shake" to help get the candy to the back of your mouth. Look at a duck when it eats - it will shake its whole body to make the food slide down its throat. You don't need to shake your whole body, just your head. After you put the candy on the back of your tongue, take a small sip of water, look up and shake your head from side to side. When you think the candy is back far enough, turn your head to the position you want to try and swallow. The "duck shake" is one of the best ways to help kids and even adults.

To watch a special video demonstration or to read more about how to swallow pills, visit:
<http://research4kids.ucalgary.ca/pillswallowing>.

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Our mission is to help improve the health and quality of life of children and teens living with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis (IBD).

We are committed to helping guide and support IBD families, teens and children by providing access to critical treatments and care, building educational resources and patient advocacy.



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