

Hard Pills to Swallow?

Two ways to help pills go down easier



Difficulty swallowing pills is a common problem. Below are some tips to help:

All medications should be taken with water, unless advised otherwise*. There's a small chance that pills could get lodged in your throat without fluid to wash them down.

If water doesn't help them go down easily, try these techniques:

- ♦ Put the pill in applesauce, yogurt or another thick liquid
- ♦ Crush, cut or grind the pill and add it to a thick liquid (you purchase a pill-splitter from the pharmacy)
- ♦ Ask your pharmacist if it's ok to cut or crush the pill. This is usually fine with tablets but can cause problems with capsules and time-released or enteric-coated pills. The pharmacist can also tell you if the medicine comes in liquid or other forms (such as lamotrigine ODT – which dissolves under the tongue).

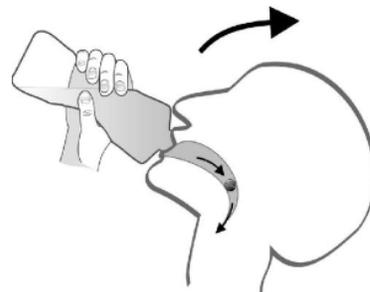
*Note: among psychiatric meds, only asenapine/Saphris needs to be taken without food or liquids

Still having trouble? Below are some advanced techniques:

Pop-bottle method for tablets:

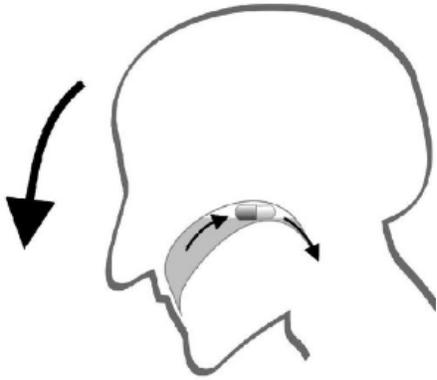
1) Fill a flexible water bottle with water (the kind you could crush by sucking on the opening).

2) Place the tablet on your tongue and close your lips tightly around the bottle. Then drink the water by sucking it down. Your lips should form a tight seal to keep air from getting in the bottle, so that the bottle squeezes in on itself as you suck the water down.



Lean-forward method for capsules:

- 1) Place the capsule on your tongue
- 2) Take a medium sip of water, but don't swallow yet.
- 3) Bend your head down by tilting your chin towards your chest and swallow the water and capsule.



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Source: Schiele JT, Schneider H, Quinzler R (2014). Two techniques to make swallowing pills easier. Annals of Family Medicine, 12(6):550-2.