

Giving Medication by Mouth

Swallowing pills, tablets, or capsules

If you are helping the person who is ill take pills, tablets, or capsules, there are a few simple rules to follow.

1. Wash your hands before and after touching any medication.
2. Follow specific instructions for giving the medication. For example, the label may specify that it needs to be given on an empty stomach or with milk or food.
3. Help the person to sit comfortably upright to make swallowing comfortable.
4. Offer the person a drink of water prior to taking a pill. Moistening the mouth will make swallowing easier.
5. A small bite of banana can help lubricate the throat and help with swallowing.

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Follow the procedures below for administering either a pill, tablet, or liquid medications under the tongue.

Before administering the medication:

1. Ensure you are giving the right medication with the right dose at the right time.
2. Wash and dry your hands before you begin and after you are done.
3. Put on medical gloves.
4. Look inside the mouth to ensure it is clean and moist. If not, provide mouth care.

Steps for administering medication under the tongue:

1. If using a tablet or pill, place the tablet under the tongue.
2. If you are giving a prefilled liquid syringe, ensure you are giving the right medication with the right dose at the right time.
3. If you don't have prefilled syringes, measure the prescribed amount in a small syringe.
4. Squirt the liquid under the tongue or in the pocket between the teeth and the cheek.
5. Ask the person not to swallow the medication once placed in the mouth. For good absorption, the medication should stay in place as long as possible.
6. Don't worry if some of the medication is accidentally swallowed.