

# Problems swallowing pills

Lots of people find it hard to swallow pills. There are things you can try to make it easier.

## Tips for swallowing pills

### Do

- ✓ take pills with water – you may also be able to take some pills with other drinks or food, but always read the instruction leaflet first
- ✓ lean forward slightly when you swallow
- ✓ practise swallowing with small sweets or bits of bread – try bigger pieces as swallowing gets easier

### Don't

- ✗ do not throw pills towards the back of your throat
- ✗ do not tip your head back too much when you swallow – this can make swallowing harder
- ✗ do not crush pills, open capsules or alter your medicine without getting medical advice – this could stop the medicine working properly

Do not try these tips if you also have difficulty swallowing food and drink because you might choke. See a pharmacist or GP for advice.

A pharmacist can advise you about:

- other versions of your medicine that might be available – for example, you might be able to get it as a liquid or a tablet that dissolves

- crushing, dividing or opening up certain tablets and capsules – but only if they tell you to do this

[Find a pharmacy](#)

## Causes of swallowing problems

Reasons for finding it hard to swallow pills include:

- fear of choking – this can make your throat tense and narrow when you try to swallow
- [a dry mouth](#)
- general swallowing difficulties (dysphagia) – for example, due to a condition such as a stroke

Page last reviewed: 27 February 2023

Next review due: 27 February 2026

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