

The why & language

Use concrete basic explanation for why they need to take medication

Is there is a way to normalize taking medication

- Do family members or peers take medications or vitamins?
- Do family members or peers eat veggies to keep their body strong?

Practice

Give them a job

Give choices - opportunities for control through medical play - practice on toys

- Work together to figure out what will work best for their toy
- Go through step by step getting ready for medication, taking medication, and activity following medication

Engage older siblings and family members to practice in safe setting

Allow for them to explore tools/items used - syringe, cup, small sample of medicine on clean surface so they can explore with their hands

Older preschooler: can begin practicing with small candy for pill swallowing

Providing Warning

Give more notice:

- 5 minutes before it is time
- 1 minute before it is time

Decide on Structure

More options for control:

- Which cup to drink from, where to sit

Provide praise for very specific things they are doing well, even if overall struggling

Routine and Time Frame

- Use a visual time (sand timer or kitchen timer) and provide them with visual for when they need to complete it by
 - Let them know, if they can't complete, then they will need their caregiver's help
 - If they are unsuccessful and the caregiver needs to take action, reassure them they can try again at the next medication time that it is okay to sometimes need help
- Something after medicine is taken to change the taste in their mouth
- Limit number of people present to minimize feeling "pressured"

Following Activity

Sticker Chart - positive reinforcement

Special activity time - have an activity they would be interested in which parent participates in (slime, play doh, pretend play)

Special snack

We want to avoid punishment or negative reinforcement - we want to always be able to focus on what they are doing well and point that out