



Tips for Making & Taking Supplements

Aside from all of the typical parental duties, those with special needs kids have an endless array of tasks and responsibilities! Do you ever chuckle to yourself when those with typical family situations grumble about how busy they are? As with everything in life, workload and stress levels are relative. Yet along with everything else, you have been your child's doctor, nurse, therapist, lab technician, teacher, sentry, nutritionist, special diet guru, medical and educational advocate, counselor, scientific researcher, anthropologist, expert developmental and medical historian, and now, pharmacist. The dark circles and glazed looks tell your story, even when others cannot seem to see or hear it. While other parents read the latest bestsellers or watch TV to unwind, you are diligently reading tedious medical books and scouring the Internet for ways to help your child develop into the most that he or she can become. Despite the exhaustion and never-ending search for medical breakthroughs, your incentive lies with every inch of progress they've made. And though this education comes with a steep price, it offers much value for others. In fact, most of us have learned more from other parents than from anyone in the medical field! With the goal of repaying the favor, here are some ideas we've picked up along the way to make your pharmacy duties a little easier.

One of the best things we've ever done with our supplements is making them up in big batches, several weeks ahead of time. We refer to these events as "Mito parties" and we make dark chocolate covered nut butter or peppermint filled candy cups, though you can choose your own acceptable favorites. While pure GF/CF dark chocolate does have a fair amount of phenols (and oxalates), we opt for it anyway since it covers many particularly unpleasant tastes and the kids end up with very small pieces. After 2 years, our kids still enjoy their breakfast, afternoon, & bedtime treats. It's also handy to do this with ours as well since we use a sprinkle of this and some crumbs of that with many supplements; after a while it's cumbersome to do this with so many. Most can be easily crushed together into a fine powder, though you shouldn't mix: Vit-C with any of the immune factors, some enzymes with probiotics, or minerals with IP-6 since the latter is an effective mineral magnet.

We chose to make a general morning & afternoon supplement that we always refer to as our "Mito," another for nighttime, which is our rotating probiotic, and a third for the tricky or as needed ones. The sporadic candies include calmers & soothers for detox weeks or the "GI cocktail," which is an amalgam of herbs for stomach bugs and yeast/fungus. Although you can certainly concoct daily smoothies and search out stealthy ways to hide stronger tasting herbs in with breakfast and dinner, it's challenging to do this every single day. Most families are just too busy and tend to miss or forget something. Unless you were given a child who will swallow anything, including capsules, the candy cups offer a reasonable method for having them all done (at least for a given period of time). This also makes it easier to pack, taking them on the go and no one blinks an eye when we give our kids some candy during a family or school event. And best of all, we can openly hand them out as treats without all of the subterfuge and covert tactics worthy of a CIA agent. We have also found that they don't seem to notice an aftertaste or the bitter hint of the B vitamins or other herbs when we very gradually increase the doses.

While it may seem like a lot of work initially, once you have the tricks of the trade and have created them at least once, it will become much less daunting. In the long run, nothing else truly affords this level of continuity, structure, and daily convenience whether you're at home, on vacation, or have busier weeks when you're most likely to



forget something. For those of you who've made homemade candy in the past, you have a decided edge over the rest of us & should have no trouble with the supplement additions. For those of you like us, who don't cook or bake, let alone make your own candy, take comfort in the fact that if we figured it out, **anyone** can!

Basic suggestions

- Consider choosing names that you won't have any concerns about when your child or a sibling mentions them around acquaintances or at a school event.
- Though many of the "tools" below are not mandatory, we went through many different kitchen utensils before finding the best ones to make the process easier and most importantly, quicker. After experimenting for months on end, we found several instruments that are not expensive yet give back oodles in return.
- Always begin with very low doses and make up a week's worth to start. Its important to consider that even though you're adding in a few crumbs or a sprinkle (whether its spread between a weeks worth of candy cups or even three), having many supplements mixed together creates synergy. This means that one supplement or drug makes another work better, which is why many drug companies add Tylenol in with painkillers.
- If a batch is too strong, don't waste it! Cut the candy cups in half or even quarters and start from there. In fact, we tend to make them too strong on purpose so that we can get more out of a batch by cutting them all in half. We've had as much as a two-month course made up at a time, though this hinders going up on various doses easily so you may want to stick to 2-3 week increments.
- If possible, have family or friends visit & entertain the kids so you can have family time yet utilize valuable daylight hours to accomplish this lengthier task. Just be sure to focus, I once had to re-make a batch three times!
- Mortar & pestles range from fancy, high-end druggist's tools to the simple, convenient, & less expensive versions found in natural health food stores. It should be heftier as the lightweight versions used for herbs won't work as well for the harder supplements with enteric coatings.
- Nut butter mixed with Xylitol & a bit of GF/CF granola is better at hiding the stronger B vitamins as well as the slightly grainier textures of some supplements. Frosting does not hide B vitamins at all unless using very low doses or dark chocolate frosting.
- Peppermint or vanilla GF/CF frosting is better for hiding probiotics & immune factors or the less robust tasting herbs (yes I know, probiotics with a bit of sugar, egad! But you do what you can when working with kids who can't swallow capsules). It's important to get them in however you can, particularly when success often lies in healing the gut first.



- You can sprinkle a probiotic onto a tiny, freshly chocolate-coated GF/CF marsh mellow (once the chocolate has cooled) or cut the larger ones in half, dig holes in them & fill it in with the supplement. This way, you are only covering the top of the hole with jam, cooled melted chocolate, etc.
- It is crucial to keep a log of the supplements with the exact doses you used. If you and your mate's sprinkles are different, write down "Janet's tiny sprinkle" or "Matt's larger sprinkle" so you can reliably keep track of this. Also, it helps to record the measuring scoop used as this can cause greater confusion the next time, which often leads to much more detox, hence more behavioral issues.
- Always have containers ready for the supplements that have the name, date, and supplement type: Mito's, GI cocktail, Probiotics, Calmers, etc.
- If you notice distinctive improvements, detox behaviors, etc., it will benefit you to have a few comments written down on the list you've made. Such methods have guided us in problem solving when things went wrong as well as helping us and revealing exceptional improvements in many areas.

Mito Party Tools

- 1). Smaller candy making sheets from Michael's, JoAnn's, etc. They have PB cups, stars, hearts, numbers, etc. They are plastic & cost \$2-\$4 each.
- 2). A cake frosting knife. I will never understand why but this works MUCH better than butter knives for scooping the mixed supplement & filling up! At \$7-\$9 for a cake knife, its more but well worth it!
- 3). A flat cookie, cake, or cutting board sheet, etc., without a lip.
- 4). Small measuring spoons. We use the Smidgen, Dash, & Pinch sized spoons from Bed, Bath & Beyond, but as long as you have a teensy measuring spoon for scooping the powder for each supplement/candy cup, it should be ok. \$3-\$5 for the set of 3 measuring spoons.
- 5). Mortar & Pestle for grinding it into a fine powder. \$10-\$20
- 6). A very firm, flat edged cake batter spatula or other utensil for splitting the powder up. \$2-\$3
- 7). A small dip-size crock pot is perfect for melting dark chocolate chips & keeping it at a stable temp without the burning and texture changes that often occur on the stove top. These are typically \$12-\$15.
- 8). Candy making sized, smaller paintbrushes--\$3 for a bag of 3-5.
- 9). Little bowls for mixing the filling & crushed supplements.
- 10). Enjoy Life GF/CF chocolate chips; nut butter: almond, cashew, or peanut butter; frosting; natural vanilla/peppermint flavor; GF/CF granola; GF/CF marshmallows, etc.

Mito Party Steps

*You need to paint/coat the candy making sheets with melted chocolate and freeze them until you are ready to make them. I often do this earlier in the week to break up the process, though it doesn't take long to coat & freeze them—30 to 45 minutes or so.

**It's also best to mix the filling ahead of time. Doing everything the day of the mito party



makes this a very lengthy process. We combine nut butter, granola, & Xylitol for stronger flavors and make vanilla or peppermint frosting for less conspicuous supplements.

***Gather everything you'll need and set it up on a clean work surface.

- 1). Collect all supplements and write down the name, the date, a list of what you plan to give and the doses (sprinkle, crumb, ½ capsule, etc) so you can readily refer to it throughout the process. Never make your supplements without referring to this list!
- 2). Start melting chocolate in little dip sized crockpot or very low heat on stove. Chocolate burns easily so watch closely.
- 3). Mix them all together and then pulverize with the mortar & pestle.
- 4). Pour powder onto flat sheet (without a lip) and split this up into 1, 2, 3, or 4 week mini piles (7 to 28 little piles) starting with the smallest measuring spoon.
*Always mark down the size of the spoon you use as you may wish to go up to the subsequent size on the next round.
- 5). In the small bowls, add your filling and scoop in a little powder pile and mix well.
- 6). Use cake frosting knife or butter knife (too much tends to stick on spoons) to scoop from the bowl to the candy cups.
- 7). Once the entire candy sheet is filled you can paint the tops with melted chocolate. You don't want to skip this step as it is MUCH harder to hide less palatable flavors and if you need to cut them up later (if they are too strong).
- 8). If you are making more than one person's candy cups that day always mark each sheet with the person's name! I can't tell you how many times we thought for sure we'd know who's was who's only to forget later on.
- 9). Place them all in the containers with the name, date, and type of supplements.
- 10). Once they have hardened up for a few days you can cup them in half or quarters if so desired or necessary.

Super Simple Candy Party

Pure chocolate candy bits & pieces rather than candy cups

- 1). Take 4-8 tablespoons 'Enjoy Life' chocolate chips and melt in a glass custard cup.
- 2). Cool slightly (still melted, but not hot) & mix in crushed supplements/powder.
- 3). Scoop the chocolate mixture onto wax paper and place in refrigerator to harden.
- 4). Break into pieces and give as a candy (which helps with those lunchtime doses & you can place in a small container or baggie for school). This works well with some of the strongest herbs and supplements.

*Optional--you can add just a touch of Himalayan Salt for more natural minerals (even lithium) or xylitol sugar to make this a touch sweeter in order to conceal bitter flavors. You can also add a few unsulfured raisins or cranberries since they'd only get 1-2 of them in each candy (if concerned about phenols).



Below are some other methods that were adapted from several different websites, including holistic cancer, Holistic Health, TACA, and several mom blogs.

Tips for Getting Children Used to Supplements

- * Begin with very tiny amounts, and work up.
- * Although there are the rare few who can get their children to take almost anything, most times, kids will not like the taste of something at first but will acclimate over time.
- * It is critical to praise or reward children when they take something distasteful as well as having a "chaser" with something delicious to wash the aftertaste away.
- * Be mindful of your own response and facial expressions! If you have a "this is going to taste horrible" look on your face and apologize for giving them it, they aren't going to respond well for sure.
- * Sing a yucky vitamins song, or bring out that old Mary Poppins favorite, "A spoon full of sugar helps the medicine go down."
- * For those having a hard time getting anything down, don't give up and try to stay positive as life is full of change and they will gradually adapt. Remind yourself that you do not have to start everything this month. Focus on what you can give now and slowly build on that foundation.
- * Remember that many times you'll need to use less preferred methods, such as using GF/CF chocolate or other foods they're normally sensitive to, however, as long as they're not allergic to them, the small amount they will receive in supplements will rarely cause a problem. Also, as they get more of their supplements, they will tolerate phenols, sulfur, and other foods more and more.

Tips for Hiding Certain Tastes

- * Designate a taster/master chef in the house who will screen the concoction you are trying to give. Make sure to check the taste appeal of any new supplement you add in, because it could throw off the whole taste and ruin the meal.
- * Taste & smell the supplement first, then try to match it with complementary tastes & colors such as sweet or tart with sweet foods. The herb nettle is dark green & shouldn't be mixed in applesauce (although you can't taste it) whereas digestive enzymes work well with smoothies, apple or pear sauce. HHI's Neurological Health formula has a stronger herb & garlic taste and may go well in soups, casseroles, meatballs, etc.
- * Smell is related to taste, so hiding the smell can help with tolerating the taste. For younger children, try putting it in a sippy cup with a lid so that they can't smell it.
- * Remember, very gradually increasing supplement amounts can help most acclimate to the taste.
- * Allowing the mixture to sit for 10-20 minutes can smooth out the texture, making it more palatable.
- * Cold foods often reduce the intensity of the taste, while warm foods usually increase it.
- * Add supplements to a spoonful of GF/CF coconut icecream, sorbet/Italian ice, a chilled smoothie or even into popsicle cubes (Although some, such as fish oil, shouldn't be frozen so always check package inserts to be sure).
- * Cold items work particularly well for the bitter-tasting gut herbs or stronger-tasting items.
- * Taste buds are particularly prominent in the front of the tongue so putting it toward the back of the tongue or cheek is often more successful.
- * If warranted, add sweeteners to foods with supplements: raw agave, xylitol sugar, unrefined birch sugar, trehalose sugar, stevia, maple syrup, raw honey, chocolate syrup,



candy cups, etc. (Avoid raw honey with probiotics or immune factors since it has natural antibacterial properties & can kill the beneficial products).

* Layering flavors is often helpful & this is one reason candy cups work so well. You can also place a thin layer of food/sweetener on a spoon while placing the supplement on next, & another thin layer of food/sweetener on top of that, having them swallow it quickly.

* Make it a game. For example, you can set up a simple egg timer and challenge them with, "I'll bet you can't take that faster than 30 seconds!" or you can have a "race" between siblings or parents—(we often took our supplements at the same time but typically allowed them to beat us, expressing that "one day, we are going to win for a change").

* Mix powders and/or drops into a juice or water/xylitol combo.

* Mix supplements in a very small amount ($\frac{1}{2}$ tspn or 2-3 ml--enough to mix to the consistency of a syrup) of something sweet (raw agave, maple syrup, honey, chocolate syrup, etc). Make sure it is liquid enough to get down the throat. Mix well and let stand to fully dissolve (Don't forget to have a chaser of something yummy ready to flush away the aftertaste).

* Liquid minerals (Bionativus, Zinc, & Cell Food) have a stronger taste that hide well in a small amount of 'Odawalla' or 'Simply' lemonade or limeade.

* If not averse to texture changes, you can insert tiny tablet pieces & crumbs or powders inside grapes, dried fruit or similar snacks.

* Mix with a teaspoon of chocolate, jam, peanut or other nut butter.

* Combine with a small amount of pear/applesauce, sandwiches, GF/CF puddings, frozen lemonade slushes, GF/CF ranch dips, ketchups, guacamole, etc.

* Make a peanut or nutbutter ball with a sweetener such as xylitol sugar, stevia, etc., and mix in supplements. This is a nice way to break up the candy cups once in a while.

Crushing and Dividing Tablets

* Use a pill cutter to split the required dose and then crush with a mortar and pestle.

* Crush tablets in a small mortar and pestle and then measure out the dose in a small spoon or supplement scoop.

* Once you can estimate the size of the doses in a small spoon or supplement scoop, pulverize the supplements to a fine powder in a coffee bean or spice grinder (best to use only for supplements). You can make up a larger batch, keeping it in an airtight container to be scooped out daily.

http://www.amazon.com/Cuisinart-MM-2M-Mini-Chopper-Grinder/dp/B00004S9EQ/ref=sr_1_3?s=home-garden&ie=UTF8&qid=1317766574&sr=1-3

or

http://www.amazon.com/Toastmaster-1119-Push-Button-Electric-Grinder/dp/B00006IUZL/ref=sr_1_7?s=home-garden&ie=UTF8&qid=1317766904&sr=1-7

How to Swallow Pills

- If you have a speech or occupational therapist, they can help your child learn how to swallow pills. Sometimes learning from others provides less resistance.
- Place an empty gelatin capsule in a jello square.
- Over time, fill the capsules with a few crumbs of the supplements though begin with xylitol sugar alone, then gradually add in supplements.



- Give an empty gelatin capsule coated with honey, applesauce, pudding, jello or yogurt.

***Making your own capsules:

Use a commercial capsule filler to make your own supplement combinations in gelatin capsules. The capsules come in different sizes: size 3 is the smallest and size 000 the largest. Gradually work up to bigger capsules.

Empty Gelatin Capsules

<http://www.cap-m-quik.com/store/empty-capsules.html>Syringes

Cap M Quik Capsule maker & kits

<http://www.cap-m-quik.com/store/all-in-one-kits.html>

<http://www.cap-m-quik.com/store/capsule-fillers.html>

- For younger children, use sports water bottles rather than a sippy cup, especially for the larger pills.
- Consider using the Oralflow Pill Swallowing Cup for \$15, which helps adults or children take their medications: <http://www.oralflo.com/>

Gut Herbs

The gut herbs deserve special mention because many of them are very bitter. However, others are neutral or sweet tasting and many of them taste fine when sweetened with xylitol sugar, raw agave, unrefined birch sugar, trehalose sugar, stevia, maple syrup, honey, etc.

* Always begin with tiny doses/amounts and work up.

* Mix all herbs together with Xylitol or unrefined sugar & water or you can use sweeter syrups and then give small amounts in a spoon or syringe at several points throughout the day. Xylitol sugar is a good choice as it helps with strep issues.

* You can also make a tea with many herbs. Fill a 4 to 5 cup teapot with boiling water & Add 6 assorted herbal teas. For instance, chamomile, neem, horsetail grass, and goldenseal are good choices and any mixture of 6 herbs is ok. Add two bags of elderberry tea (for anti-viral properties) and allow it to soak until it cools to room temperature. Take out the tea bags and pour the liquid into a half-gallon pitcher. Fill the pitcher with cold water, and add trehalose or xylitol to sweeten and keep in the refrigerator - See a post by Dr. Amy Yasko:

"In response to those having trouble with the herbs...I used to do a lot more with interesting teas. We do have most of the herbs in stock as very potent teas. If you mix the more horrible tasting herbs in a tea format with some of the nicer tasting ones like elderberry and chamomile, and then sweeten the tea with xylitol and/or trehalose you can keep them in the refrigerator and use them instead of juice. This is an easy way to get the herbs in throughout the course of the day.

The elderberry is a dark purple color and has a very strong but pleasant taste. It will help to mask the taste of a lot of other more dreadful tasting herbs. Elderberry is excellent for protection against the flu, as well as having a number of other positive health benefits. All teas are not created equal. They are like supplements. You want to use a tea that is equivalent in efficacy to an encapsulated herb".



Supplements with Enteric Coating

* Some supplements are made to be taken as a whole, and not crushed. This is due to a hard, enteric coating, which helps them pass through the stomach. If you can, give these in small pieces with some of the coating left but if not, crushing them up & mixing with the rest is okay as well. SAME and Calcium are two examples.

* The SAME deserves special mention here because they are tablets with an enteric coating. When they are crushed or cut and exposed to air, they often become gummy. If you are giving a half of a SAME, crush the first half and put it in the food/drink right away and take the second half and slip it into a bottle with a moisture pack so that it doesn't become gummy. However, we have never had problems crushing these and putting into the candy cups.

Lipid-Based Gelcaps

* Poke the gelcap with a pin or a tack & squeeze out the dose (Examples are Co Q 10, Vit K, Vit E, & PS/PC/PE).

In the beginning, it's challenging enough to learn the information while trying out all of the different methods so please avoid making anything more demanding. You don't need to act out the part of super sleuth every day in order to deliver your child's supplements. Remember; don't burden yourself more by worrying over how much you can't give and don't agonize over the techniques you need to use in order to give them. It doesn't matter if they are sensitive to phenols and you decide to use dark chocolate—use it! In the end, they will be receiving very little of this substance yet it will benefit them greatly to receive the necessary nutrients. Consistency is essential so find the system that will work best for you and your family. My only caveat is that no matter what process you choose, please try to stay ahead by making up enough candy bits, candy cups, smoothies, teas, powders, etc., so that you can give the supplements every day. You and your child will not only respond better, you will also have much less stress in return.