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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## The English We Speak

### A bitter pill to swallow

The logo for BBC Learning English, featuring the letters 'BBC' in a white box above the words 'LEARNING ENGLISH' in white text on a teal background.

*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Feifei**

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak. I'm Feifei and joining me today is Rob.

**Rob**

Hi everyone... errr, Feifei are you OK? You don't sound as cheerful as normal.

**Feifei**

I feel terrible today – I've got a headache, feel really tired... I think I'm developing flu. I'm going to take these paracetamol tablets.

**Rob**

Hold on Feifei. Are you sure you're getting flu? This hasn't got anything to do with that job promotion you didn't get?

**Feifei**

Of course not... well maybe a little.

**Rob**

Hmm, I know you wanted that promotion so much but Daisy got it instead didn't she?

**Feifei**

Exactly – and I've been working here much longer than her and I have loads more experience. It's so unfair!

**Rob**

I know... it's a bitter pill to swallow.

**Feifei**

Thanks for the advice but even if these tablets – or pills - are bitter, they'll make me feel better – now can you show me some more sympathy about my promotion please?

**Rob**

I was Feifei! When I said 'it's a bitter pill to swallow' I really meant it's a situation that is unpleasant and difficult to accept.

**Feifei**

OK, I see! You're saying I'm finding Daisy's promotion hard to accept?

**Rob**

It's tough Feifei but that's the way things are. Let's hear some more examples of this phrase in action...

**Examples**

*When John found out about his wife's affair with his best friend, it was a bitter pill to swallow.*

*It was a bitter pill to swallow knowing that my older sister finished the race quicker than me.*

*My friend has booked the same flights as me for half the price – it's a bitter pill to swallow!*

**Feifei**

So 'a bitter pill to swallow' means I don't like what's happened but I will have to accept it? Hmm, I like the phrase but it doesn't make me feel any better.

**Rob**

You'll just have to swallow the decision Feifei! Daisy is going to be your boss now.

**Feifei**

Oh dear... I think my flu might be getting worse now... I'm definitely going to take these paracetamol now... Yuk, that really was bitter!

**Rob**

I think two tablets are enough for now Feifei. Maybe you should take tomorrow off work.

**Feifei**

What a great idea Rob. See you later.

**Rob**

Bye!