

Your Children and Medicines

Your Children's Medication Is in Your Hands

When your child needs to take medicine, you as the parent or caregiver must make sure the medicine is used correctly.

If you don't help your child use the medicines properly, your child may take longer to get well or might not stay well. Your child's health could be at risk.

Don't take chances. This brochure can help you and your child get the most from medicines.

Be sure to teach your children at an early age the difference between harmful, illegal drugs and medicines that can help them. This is an important part of teaching children to take care of themselves.

When Children Need Medicine

It is very important to talk to the child's doctor, pharmacist, or other health professional to make sure you know what to do.

On the back of this brochure is a list of the things you should know about all your child's medicines. You should know these things about medicines that a doctor prescribes and those you buy without a prescription. Make sure you understand all the instructions before you take the medicine home. Don't be afraid to ask questions!

When Your Child Says “No!”

Sometimes it’s hard to get children to take medicine! Here are some ideas that might help:

- Sometimes the same medicine comes in either pills, capsules, or liquid. If you’re having trouble getting your child to take it, ask your doctor or pharmacist if it comes in an easier form.
- Some liquid medicines taste better if they’re cold. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you can put your child’s medicine in the refrigerator.
- Have a glass of the child’s favorite drink handy to wash away the taste of liquid medicine.
- Sometimes you can crush pills or open capsules and mix the medicine with jam or applesauce. However, you shouldn’t do this with some kinds of medicines. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you can do this with your child’s pills or capsules.
- If the medicine is in capsules and the doctor or pharmacist says not to open them, you can wet them. This makes the gelatin coating slippery, which makes the capsule easier to swallow.

Spotting Side Effects

You should watch to see if your child becomes overactive, dizzy, drowsy, or develops a rash or an upset stomach. If your child has these or any other unusual symptoms, call your doctor.

Some Do's...

- ❁ Use a medicine dropper or dispenser to give liquid medicines to infants and young children.
- ❁ Watch how your child acts after taking the medicine. If you think it is causing side effects, call the doctor.
- ❁ If the child is older, decide together how to make sure the medicine is taken correctly. You should still check on older children and teens to make sure they follow through.
- ❁ Talk to others who take care of your child — such as grandparents, step-parents, baby-sitters, or the school nurse — about the child's medicine schedule and side effects to watch for.

Some Don'ts...

- ❁ Never stop giving your child the medicine or change doses without checking with the doctor.
- ❁ Never give more medicine than the doctor directed.
- ❁ Never stop giving medicine because the child refuses to take it. If the child refuses, call the doctor or pharmacist and ask what to do..
- ❁ Never skip doses.
- ❁ Never give a child medicine that was prescribed for someone else.

TAKE IT RIGHT!

Make sure you know these things about every medicine your child takes:

- Its name
- Why your child is taking it
- How much your child should take each time
- How often your child should take it each day
- When your child should take it each day
- How long your child should take it for
- What foods, drinks, other medicines, or activities your child should avoid
- What the side effects might be and what to do if your child has them
- Where to keep it
- Where to get it refilled

Your doctor or pharmacist should provide you with this information.

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