

Giving Medicine to Babies and Children



For infants:

Action	Why?
After preparing the correct dose of medicine in a syringe, place a nipple in the infant's mouth and allow them to suck the medicine from the nipple at their own pace.	Preemies and very young babies can be uncoordinated at sucking and swallowing and may choke if medicine is placed directly in their mouth.
Use an oral syringe to slowly squirt the medication into the side of the mouth.	Medicine given directly in the mouth may hit the back of the throat and cause choking or coughing.
When indicated, mix medication with ½ ounce of milk, diluted juice or small amount of food. Be sure not to use the child's favorite food.	Helps with the bad taste of some medicines. Using a favorite food may cause the child not to enjoy that food anymore.

Miller Children's Hospital Long Beach: Patient/Family Education Committee

Giving Medicine to Babies and Children

For children 3 or more years of age:




Action	Why?
Offer fruit juice, cold milk, yogurt or pudding between and after doses.	Helps with the bad taste of some medicines.
Offer peanut butter, jelly, honey or ice cream.	Helps with the bad taste of some medicines.




For all ages:

Action	Why?
Never mix a medicine dose with a whole feeding.	If the whole feeding is not completed, the whole dose of medicine has not been taken.
If a child vomits after getting the medicine, do not give another dose. If he/she vomits again with the medicine, call your doctor.	Your doctor needs to know your child is not getting needed medicine and may want to prescribe another.
Never give extra doses, skip a dose or change the amount of medicine without first checking with your doctor.	You may under or overdose your child.
Never give another person's prescription.	Your child may be allergic or have a bad reaction to someone else's medicine.
Never give medicine that is past the expiration date.	The medicine may have lost its effectiveness.
Never tell a child medicine is candy.	A child may accidentally take harmful medicine he thinks is candy.
Follow your medication schedule.	You will be less likely to forget a medicine or give it twice.

Giving Medicine to Babies and Children

How to Measure Medicine with a Syringe	Why?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fill the syringe with the prescribed dose of medicine. Line the top of the black line of the plunger with desired dose on the syringe. 2. Hold the syringe upright and gently tap air bubbles to the end. 3. Push the plunger gently to force the air out of the end. 4. Check to make sure the correct dose is still in the syringe. If there is not enough, add more. If there is too much, squirt the extra medicine back in the bottle. 	<p>Medicine doses for infants and children are based on weight. The doses are very specific and must be measured carefully.</p> 

How to Prevent Mistakes when Giving Medicine	5 RIGHT things to ensure you're giving medicine correctly
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Know the name of the medicine. 2. Know the correct amount of medicine. 3. Know the time(s) of day to give medicine. 4. Check the medicine bottle before measuring the medicine. 5. Know the number of days to give medicine (or give the medicine until discontinued by the doctor). 6. Know any special instructions (example: give with food, give on an empty stomach, refrigerate, etc.). 7. Know side effects to watch for. 8. Call your doctor if you have concerns. 9. Never give medicine in the dark. 10. Never give medicine from an unlabelled bottle. 11. Never stop giving the medicine without checking with your doctor. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RIGHT medicine 2. RIGHT dose 3. RIGHT time and frequency 4. RIGHT way (by mouth, on skin, subcutaneous injection, inhalation) 5. RIGHT child  <p>Keep in mind: It is very easy to make a mistake in the dark. It may not be the right medicine.</p>