NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL℠

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MEDICATION SAFETY

Many children need medicine from time to time to treat different illnesses or conditions. Some of these medicines are taken for a short time. Others may be taken for years. Here are some tips for the safe use of medicines.

- Some medicine comes in containers that toddlers may be able to open on their own. *One tablet of the wrong medicine could cause serious problems for a child.* Be sure to store all medicines out of the reach of children to prevent an accidental overdose.
- If you have visitors in your home, remind them to store their medicines out of the reach of curious children. After your visitors leave, check to make sure they took their medicine with them.
- Over-the-counter medicines can be dangerous if taken in large doses, if taken by a person who is allergic to the medicine, or if the person takes other medicines that interact with the over-the-counter medicine. Be sure to store non-prescription medicines in a safe location also.
- Do not share medicine. Never give one child's medicine to someone else. Never give a child medicine prescribed for an adult.
- Many medicines (especially liquid antibiotics) must be stored in the refrigerator. Be sure to check the label on the medicine for proper storage.
- Use an accurate measuring device. A regular teaspoon is not accurate enough. An oral syringe or pediatric measuring device is much better. Ask your pharmacist how you can get one.
- Keep an up-to-date list of your child's medicines with you at all times. The list should include prescription medicine, over-the-counter medicine, herbal products, and dietary supplements. This list can be very useful in case of an emergency or if your child must be admitted to the hospital.
- Take all of your prescriptions to the same pharmacy. This helps the pharmacist to check for drug interactions.
- Tell your doctor about medicines your child takes that were prescribed by a different doctor.

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE PHARMACIST

- How should my child take this medicine?
- What is this medicine being used for?
- What are common side effects for this medicine?
- What should I do if my child misses a scheduled dose of this medicine?
- What steps do I need to take to get more medicine when this supply runs out?
- What should I do if my child vomits his medicine?

Picture 1 Ask your pharmacist or doctor any questions you have about medicines.

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