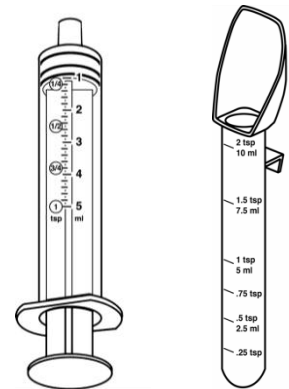


Medicine: How to Give by Mouth

Getting infants and young children to take medicine can be very difficult. Here are some suggestions and safety tips that may make giving medicine easier for both you and your child.

Remember

- Read the label **each time** before you give the medicine.
- If the medicine is a liquid, use a pediatric measuring device (available at the pharmacy), such as a measuring spoon or oral medicines in kitchen spoons. (Picture 1)
- Give the **exact amount** of medicine that your doctor ordered.
- Stay with your child until he or she has swallowed the dose of medicine.
- The doctor has prescribed this medicine only for your child. **Do not** give it to anyone else.
- Never call medicine candy.



Picture 1 Use a pediatric measuring device for liquid medicines. Do not use an ordinary kitchen spoon.

A Positive Approach

Your approach to your child taking medicine is very important. A child can sense your feelings. If you say, "You will have to take your medicine," but you feel sorry for the child or hesitate, he may get the idea that you don't really mean what you say. Children usually respond to what they **think you mean**, not what you say. A matter-of-fact approach is usually best. This means you expect the child to take the medicine just as you expect him to put on his coat before going out in cold weather. **Be consistent!**

Safety Tips for Infants (Newborn to One Year Old)

- Do not squirt medicine directly at the back of the baby's throat. This may cause your child to choke.
- Give small amounts of medicine at a time to avoid choking.
- Let the baby swallow all the medicine before you give more.

Tips for Giving Medicine to Infants

Here are some ways to give medicine to a baby. Choose the one that you think will work with your baby. If that method does not work, try another one.

- Draw up the correct amount of medicine into an oral syringe (a syringe without a needle). Let your infant suck the medicine out of the syringe.
- Give the medicine right before feeding the baby unless your doctor tells you not to. This way the baby is hungry and more likely to swallow the medicine.
- When giving medicine to an infant, use his natural reflexes (such as sucking) whenever possible.
- Stroke the infant's cheek gently. This will usually get him to open his mouth. When he does open his mouth, put a small amount of medicine on either side of his tongue. Let him swallow, then repeat the process until the dose of medicine is gone. Hold the infant in a nearly upright position. If your infant struggles, **gently** hold one arm and place his other arm around your waist. Hold baby close to your body (Picture 2).
- **Avoid mixing medicine with foods your child must have.** The child may begin to dislike the foods he needs. Mix the medicine with a **small amount** (1 to 2 teaspoons) of applesauce or pears and give it with a spoon. This is a good way to give pills that have been crushed well. (To crush a pill, place it between two spoons and press the spoons together.)
- Some medicines can be put in a **small amount** of juice or sugar water. Follow the instructions from your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. Do not put medicine in a full bottle or cup in case the infant does not drink very much.



Picture 2 When giving liquid medicine, hold your baby on your lap in a nearly upright position.

Giving Medicine to a Child 1 Year and Older

Your attitude toward giving medicine is especially important with young children. These are some ways to give medicine. Try one that you think will work with your child. If that method does not work, try another one.

- Give the medicine straight from a pediatric measuring device (Picture 2, page 1). (Ask your pharmacist for one). Household spoons should not be used to measure medicine.
- Mix the medicine with a **small amount** (1 to 2 teaspoons) of juice or sweetened water. Give with a spoon or let your child drink it.

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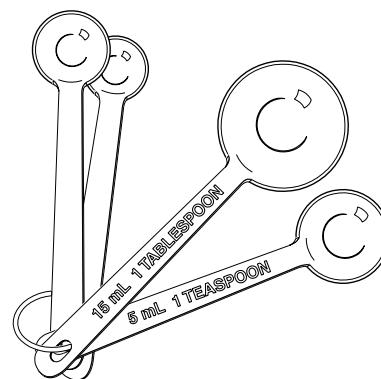
Giving Medicine to a Child 1 Year and Older, continued

- Try mixing the medicine with a **small amount** of soft foods like ice cream, pudding, or jelly. Do not use foods your child must have, such as meat or vegetables.
- Try mixing the medicine with small amounts of food that have a strong flavor. This helps hide the taste of the medicine. Mixing with sweet or cold foods may also help.
- Explain to your child why he needs to take the medicine in words he can understand. (For example, "This medicine will make your tummy stop hurting.")
- Whenever possible let the child choose how and when to take the medicine (or which one to take first). Let him hold the spoon, cup, or syringe and take it himself.
- Praise your child every time he takes the medicine without a struggle. (Giving a special sticker works well for some children.)
- Try to ignore your child's behavior when he does not cooperate.
- Never give medicine right after disciplining your child. He may think the medicine is punishment.
- **Never threaten your child** with a "shot" if he does not take the medicine.
- **Never call medicine "candy."** Call it medicine.
- Give a drink of water after your child takes the medicine.
- If you need to mix the medicine in food or liquids, ask your child's doctor or pharmacist what foods can or cannot be used. Some food or drinks make the medicine not work well.

Comparing Measuring Spoons to Metric Measurements

Measuring Spoon Metric (1 mL = 1 cc)

1/4 teaspoon	=	1 1/4 mL
1/2 teaspoon	=	2 1/2 mL
3/4 teaspoon	=	3 3/4 mL
1 teaspoon	=	5 mL
1 1/2 teaspoons	=	7.8 mL
2 teaspoons	=	10 mL
1 tablespoon	=	15 mL
1 ounce	=	30 mL



Picture 3 Measuring spoons

If You Forget to Give a Dose (for Most Medicines)

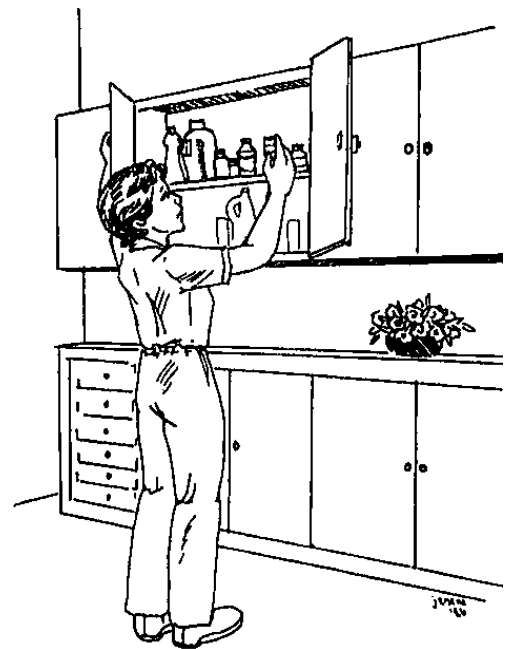
- If you forget to give a dose of the medicine, give it as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for the next dose, do not give the missed dose at all and do not double the next dose.
- Call your doctor, nurse or pharmacist before giving a missed dose if you have any questions.

If a Dose is Vomited (for Most Medicines)

- If your child gags or chokes and spits out the dose **before swallowing it**, let the child calm down and then give the same amount once more.
- If the dose is vomited (thrown up), check with your doctor before repeating the dose.

Storage of Medicine

- Store all medicine out of sight and out of reach of children (Picture 4).
- Light and moisture make most medicines less effective. Keep the container tightly capped and store in a dark, dry place (not in the bathroom or above the kitchen sink).
- Some medicines need to be kept in the refrigerator. Make sure these have a safety cap.
- Always keep medicine in the labeled container it came in.
- If your childcare provider needs to give the medicine, ask the pharmacist for 2 labeled containers.
- If you carry the medicine in your purse, keep it in its childproof container and keep your purse out of the reach of children.
- Do not use any medicine after the expiration date printed on the container.
- If your doctor decides the medicine is no longer needed, get rid of the remaining medicine (see *Medicine: Proper Disposal*, HH-V-228).
- Remind guests in your home to keep their medicines out of the reach of children.



Picture 4 Store all medicine out of the reach of children

Safety Tips and Other Advice

- Do not stop giving the medicine or change the amount without talking with your child's doctor first.
- If your child needs prescription medicines, do not give non-prescription medicines (such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, aspirin, antacids, or cold medicines) without checking with your child's doctor first.
- Learn the name, spelling, dosage and side effects of any medicine your child is taking.
- Bring all your child's medicines with you (in the original containers) whenever your child sees a doctor, goes to an emergency room, or is admitted to the hospital. This helps doctors take care of your child.
- Tell your child's teacher, school nurse, school coach, baby-sitter, and others that your child is taking the medicine and what side effects to watch for.
- If the medicine looks different than usual, ask the pharmacist if it is the right medicine before giving it to your child.
- **If your child takes too much of the medicine, or if someone else takes this medicine, first call the Central Ohio Poison Center helpline at 1-800-222-1222 (TTY 1-866-688-0088).** They will tell you what to do.
- The doctor has prescribed the medicine for your child **only**. Do not give it to anyone else.
- Mix leftover medicine with an unwanted material like coffee grounds or kitty litter, and place the mixture back in the pill container or in another container that will not leak. Throw the container away in the trash where children and pets cannot reach it.