



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.

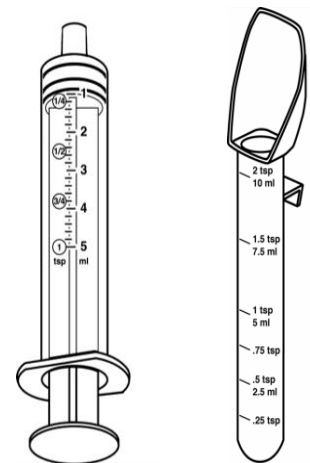
Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Medicine: How to Give by Mouth

Giving medicine to infants and young children can be hard. Here are some suggestions and safety tips that may make giving medicine easier:

- Read the label each time before you give the medicine.
- If the medicine is a liquid, use a pediatric measuring device or syringe (Picture 1). You can get these at the pharmacy. Never measure liquid medicines in kitchen spoons.
- Give the exact amount of medicine ordered.
- Ask your child's doctor, health care provider, or pharmacist if the medicine can be mixed with foods or drinks. Some foods or drinks make the medicine not work well.
- Stay with your child until they swallow all of the medicine.
- This medicine is only for your child. **Do not give it to anyone else.**
- Never call medicine "candy." Call it medicine.



Picture 1 Use a pediatric measuring device for liquid medicines.

A Positive Approach

The way you give medicine to your child is very important. A direct approach is usually best. This means you expect your child to take the medicine just as you expect them to put on their coat before going out in cold weather.

How to Give to Infants (Newborn to One Year Old)

Here are the ways to give medicine to an infant. Choose the one that you think will work with your baby. If one 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. **Do not squirt medicine directly at the back of the baby's throat. This may cause them to choke.**

- Give small amounts of medicine at a time to avoid choking (Picture 2).
- Let your baby swallow all the medicine before you give more.
- Give the medicine right before a feeding unless your doctor tells you not to. Your baby is hungry and more likely to swallow the medicine. You know that your baby may be hungry by watching for their sucking reflex.
- Avoid mixing medicine with foods your child must have. They may begin to dislike the foods they need.
- Some medicines may be crushed and mixed in soft food. Check with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist first. To crush a pill, place it between two spoons and press the spoons together. Mix the medicine with a small amount (1 to 2 teaspoons) of applesauce or pears and give it with a spoon.
- Some medicines can be put in a small amount of juice or sugar water. 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.

How to Give 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 one method does not work, try another one.

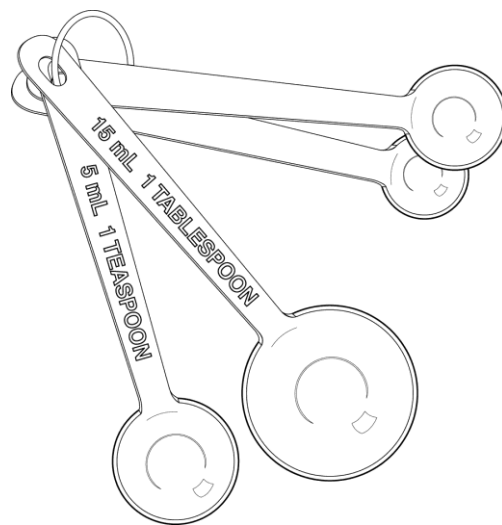
- Give the medicine from a pediatric measuring device (Picture 1, page 1).
- Check with your doctor, health care provider, or pharmacist before crushing medicines and mixing them in soft food, like ice cream, pudding, or applesauce. Do not use foods your child must have, such as meat or vegetables.
- 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.
- Some medicines can be put in a small amount of juice or sugar water. 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. Do not put medicine in a full cup in case your child does not drink very much. Follow the instructions from your child's doctor, health care provider, or pharmacist.
- If your child doesn't like the taste of the medicine, offer a popsicle before giving it. The popsicle will freeze the taste buds, so the medicine doesn't taste as bad.

- Explain to your child why they need to take the medicine in words they can understand. For example, “This medicine will make your tummy stop hurting.”
- When possible, let your child help take the medicine. Your child can hold the spoon, cup, or syringe and take it themselves.
- Praise your child when they take the medicine without a struggle. Giving a special sticker works well for some children.
- Try to ignore your child’s behavior when they do not cooperate.
- Never give medicine right after disciplining your child. They may think the medicine is punishment.
- Never threaten your child with a “shot” if they do not take the medicine.
- Give your child a drink of water after they take the medicine.
- If you do not have a medicine spoon or syringe from a pharmacist, use a measuring spoon made for cooking (Picture 3).

Measuring Spoon Conversion Table

Measuring Spoon Metric

1/4 teaspoon	=	1.25 mL
1/2 teaspoon	=	2.5 mL
3/4 teaspoon	=	3.75 mL
1 teaspoon	=	5 mL
1 1/2 teaspoons	=	7.5 mL
2 teaspoons	=	10 mL
1 tablespoon	=	15 mL
1 ounce	=	30 mL



Picture 3 Measuring spoons for cooking