# Giving Medicine Safely to Your Child



## A guide for children, teens, and caregivers

Follow your child's pharmacy label or the Drug Facts label on nonprescription medicine. If directions are unclear, ask the pharmacist or care team before giving a dose.

### Before each dose

Match the child's name, medicine name, strength, amount, and timing to the label. Follow age and weight limits on nonprescription products.

Check active ingredients so you do not give the same medicine twice.

Use only the exact medicine, strength, and amount directed for your child. Do not choose an adult nonprescription product or someone else's prescription. Ask the pharmacist before changing brands, strength, or release formulation.

### Measuring liquid medicine

Use the medicine's oral syringe or marked dosing device. Measure in milliliters (mL). Never use a kitchen spoon. Milligrams (mg) and milliliters (mL) are different units.

Keep the child sitting upright and give liquid slowly toward the inside of the cheek.

Do not crush tablets, open capsules, or mix medicine into food unless the pharmacist confirms it is safe.

## My child's medicine plan

Copy from the pharmacy label; ask the pharmacist to confirm.

Medicine and strength:

Amount per dose: Time(s) to give:

**Learn more**

CDC: Medication safety

# Medicine at Home

## Practical steps between appointments



### Daily routines

Record each dose and time, especially when caregivers share the job. Share the plan with family, school, and childcare staff who are allowed to give the medicine.

Fully close child-resistant caps and keep medicines in their original containers, up, away, and out of sight. Use locked storage when needed to prevent accidental access, misuse, or self-harm. Never share prescribed medicine.

If a dose is missed, spit out, or vomited, do not automatically repeat it or double the next one. Ask what to do for this medicine.

Use a take-back program for unused or expired medicine.

### When to seek help

Contact the care team promptly for new or worsening symptoms, a rash, repeated vomiting, unusual sleepiness, or other unexpected effects. Ask which changes need a same-day call and which can wait for routine follow-up.

Call Poison Help at **1-800-222-1222** right away for a possible wrong medicine, extra dose, or accidental swallowing, even if your child seems well. Keep the medicine container nearby. Do not give home remedies or try to make the child vomit.

Call **911** now if the child has trouble breathing, collapses, has a seizure, or cannot be awakened. Severe lip or tongue swelling needs emergency medical care.

## For your next appointment

Ask about goals, urgent side effects, missed or vomited doses, and which growth checks, blood-pressure checks, or tests this medicine needs. Know whom to contact between visits.

**Learn more**

CDC: Medication safety

# Sources and References


1. **Got a Sick Kid? Don’t Guess. Read the Label. Make sure you’re giving your children the right medicine and the right amount**

   U.S. Food and Drug Administration

   https://www.fda.gov/drugs/safe-use-over-counter-otc-medicines-children/got-sick-kid-dont-guess-read-label-make-sure-your-e-giving-your-children-right-medicine-and-right

2. **Calling Poison Help**

   Health Resources and Services Administration

   https://poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/faq/calling-poison-help

3. **What You Can Do**

   Health Resources and Services Administration

   https://poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/what-you-can-do