



Giving Your Child Medicine

Giving your newborn medicine requires special “tools” to ensure the proper dosage with the least amount of spillage. And it’s always important to watch for side effects when your baby’s taking medication.

Know about the medication you’re giving.

- Check that the prescription is filled correctly before leaving the pharmacy.
- Will there be a problem with other drugs your child is taking?
- How often and for how long does she need to take it?
- What if she misses a dose?
- How soon will it start working and what side effects does it have?

Be aware of the different tools there are for giving the right dosage of pediatric liquids.

- **Oral droppers:** for infants and babies too young to drink from a cup. Measure the dosage at eye level and give it to the baby quickly before it drips out.
- **Hypodermic syringes without needles and oral syringes:** These work well with infants who can’t drink from a cup. Gently squirt the medicine into the back of the mouth where it’s less likely to spill out. If the syringe has a plastic cap, make sure you remove it before putting the syringe into your baby’s mouth.
- **Dosing spoons:** Use a dosing spoon for easy measuring and dosing. It looks like a test tube with a spoon at the opening. You can check the measurement on the side and your baby can hold it.
- **Plastic medicine cups:** These work well for children who can drink from a cup without spilling. To get the correct dose, always be sure to pour the medicine while the cup is sitting flat and at eye level.

Side Effects

Prescription and over-the-counter medications usually have potential side effects. Some are mild and nonthreatening; others can lead to more serious complications. Even if a side effect is listed as normal, if your child is having a reaction, call your doctor.

Dosing Tips

- Give your child the same dosage at the same time every day.
- If you don’t think the medicine is effective, call your doctor before changing.
- If you don’t feel good about a side effect, call your doctor.
- Getting the dosage right for over-the-counter medication is just as important as for prescription medicines.
- Always finish the medication as instructed by your doctor, even if your baby seems better after a couple of days.
- Always follow the instructions.