

Tips for Administering Medications to Infants and Young Children

Liquids:

1. Shake the medication well.
2. Use the correct measuring device. Acceptable devices for measuring liquids include a calibrated medicine dropper, dosing medicine spoon, medicine cup, measuring spoon, plastic syringe, or calibrated nipple.
3. Deliver medication. Hold infant in a semi-reclining position. For small infants, squirt the medication into the back of the cheek slowly in small squirts to prevent or minimize spit up. To encourage infants to swallow you can blow a small puff of air in their face or stroke the side of the child's neck to stimulate the gag reflexes. This usually produces a swallowing reflex. Liquid medications for an infant may also be placed in a nipple for them to suck and then follow with a bottle. Never mix the medication into a whole bottle.

Tablets or Pills: Give the pill with enough water for the child to successfully swallow the pill. If medication must be crushed, find correct information before doing so. Some medications cannot be crushed. NEVER MIX MEDS IN MORE THAN 1 TSP OF FOOD/LIQUID! What is mixed must be eaten completely

Inhalants:

1. Nebulizer- Have the parent show you how to use the nebulizer correctly.
2. Inhaler- Read proper instructions. Shake the inhaler before using. Have the child breathe out fully. While they breathe in slowly and deeply, depress the top of the inhaler to release the medication. Have the child hold their breath for 10 seconds. Count to ten with the child or sing a short verse while the child is holding his breath. Remove the inhaler and have the child breath out slowly through the nose. Repeat in 2 to 5 minutes according to the directions. Spacers are now recommended for children.

Ear drops: Have the child lie flat and turn to face the opposite side. For children age 3 and younger, gently pull the outer ear down and back. For children older than 3, gently pull the ear up and back. Then drop the medication on the side of the canal. Avoid touching the dropper to anything. Have the child lie in the same position for a few minutes. You can rub the skin in front of the ear to assist the medication flow. If indicated you may also place a dampened cotton ball loosely in the ear.

Eye drops: When instilling eye medications, have the child lay on their back with their neck extended and ask them to look up. In one hand hold the dropper and rest the heel of that hand on the child's forehead. With the other hand pull the lower lid downward. As the lower lid is pulled downward, a small sac is formed. Another technique is to pull the lower eyelid down and out to form a cup effect. This area is where you should put the medication. Never try to put the medication directly on the eyeball.

- For infants, one approach is to place the drops in the nasal corner of the eye where the lids meet. The medication pools in this area and when the child opens the eye, the medication flows over the eye.
- For young children it may be helpful to play game. Have the child keep their eyes closed until the count of three and then quickly instill the drops. For the difficult child, have him squeeze his eye shut as tight as he can. Then put the drops in the inner corner of his eye and ask him to blink several times. Then blot out the excess if needed.
- Ointment can be applied while the child is sleeping by gently pulling down the lower lid and placing the ointment in the lower sac of the eye.

Topical:

- For broken skin or lesions, always wear gloves. Cleanse the skin, apply the medication in a thin layer, and record any changes in the skin condition. Notify the parents of any change.
- You must have a signed Permission to Medicate Form when applying sunscreen, lotions, or even diaper rash ointment.

Injectables: Please get proper training before doing so. Always wear gloves and dispose of needles in a needle safe container. Common injectable medications for children are insulin and the epi pen.