

Medication Administration in Child Care

1. Caregivers should follow these proper procedures when administering medications:
 - a) read and understand the label/prescription directions in relation to the measured dose, frequency, and other circumstances relative to administration (for example – does the medicine need to be given with food?)
 - b) check the 5 “Rights” before giving the medication – the right child, the right medication, the right dose, the right time, and the right route (ex. where do the drops go – ears, eyes, nose?)
 - c) wash hands before administering the medication (and after)
 - d) observe child closely for a reaction and report any side effects from the medication
 - e) document the administration of each dose by the time and the amount given – also document if a medication was not given and the reason why it was not given
2. All prescribed medication should be kept in the original container labeled by a pharmacist with the following information:
 - a) the child's first and last names (the name of the child on the medication and the child receiving the medication **MUST** be the same)
 - b) the date the prescription was filled (must be a current date)
 - c) the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription
 - d) the medication's expiration date (never give expired medication)
 - e) the manufacturer's instructions or prescription label with specific, legible instructions for administration, storage, and disposal
 - f) the name and the strength of the medication
3. Over-the-Counter (OTC) medications should be kept in the original container as sold by the manufacturer, labeled with the child's name by the parent. OTC medications should be given according to the manufacturer's instructions unless a health care provider provides written instructions otherwise. OTC medication should only be given with written parental permission for a maximum of 3 days. If a parent requests the OTC medication to be given longer, an order from a health care provider is recommended.
4. All medications, refrigerated or un-refrigerated, should have child-resistant caps, be kept in an organized fashion, be stored away from food at the proper temperature, and should be inaccessible to children (preferably a locked cupboard/drawer/box). Refrigerated medication should be placed on the top shelf of refrigerator instead of inside the door so it is not easily accessible to children.
5. If a medication is to be given three times a day, the child care provider should only be required to give one dose. The morning and evening doses should be given at the child's home. If a medication is to be given twice a day, the child care provider should not have to give any doses. Both of the doses should be given at home, before and after care. Doses of medication need to be given at certain time intervals in order to treat an infection effectively. Example, if a medication is to be given three times a day, there should be eight hours between doses. If all 3 doses are given at child care, then there is only 3 hours between doses.
6. Parents should always be notified in every instance when medication is used, if it wasn't scheduled to be given. Advance notification (before medication is given) is ideal, but may not be appropriate if a child needs medication urgently (such as to stop an allergic reaction) or if contacting the parent will delay appropriate care.
7. Always use a medication dispenser (ex. dropper, medicine cup) instead of household silverware (ex. teaspoon, tablespoon) for measuring and giving medicine. Also, always use the measuring device that comes with the medication from the manufacturer (if there is one) – such as the dropper that comes in the bottle of infant Tylenol (do not substitute other droppers to give Tylenol or use the Tylenol dropper to give other medications).
8. Infant drops are stronger or more concentrated than liquid medicine (ex. Tylenol). Be especially careful to check the amount of medicine you should give.
9. When giving medicine to infants, use a syringe or oral dropper that has volume labels on it. Fill the device with the correct dose, and then squirt the medicine slowly into the inside of the infant's cheek. Wait for the infant to swallow each portion.
10. Never put medicine in a sippy cup or bottle filled with milk, juice, formula, etc. It is too difficult to know if the child got the entire dose. If parents ask you to make sure their child finishes a bottle or sippy cup that contains medication, explain to them that you cannot because you did not measure the medicine yourself. It is the responsibility of the parents to make sure their child finishes it.