

Prevent Medication Errors

Avoid medication errors in children. Common mistakes include giving the wrong medicine or wrong dose. Even the most careful parents make medication slip-ups with their child.

Medication errors can especially harm children. Small, sick and still-developing bodies are less able to withstand these errors. Also, many kids lack the skills to communicate adverse reactions to their parents.

Children are not small adults. They cannot take all medicines. In fact, researchers have not studied the effects of all medications on a child's young body.

Parents can prevent medication errors. Ask your doctors and pharmacists questions about medications. Follow these tips to avoid mistakes when giving medicine to your child.

- Give your doctor a list of all of your child's medications. Include prescription drugs, over the counter drugs, vitamins and herbal supplements.
- *Update* your child's med list often. Keep this list with you. Show it to any doctor or health care provider who sees your child.
- Store all medication in the original container – with the label. If you cannot read the label – *call the doctor. Do not guess.*



- Take notes at the doctor's office. Ask for written directions. Repeat the directions in your own words to be sure you understood them correctly.
- Keep a log of times and amounts of medicine given to your child. *Do not trust your memory.* Most kids have more than one caregiver. These logs help prevent overdosing.
- Use correct devices when giving medicine. Always use the device that comes with the medication. Never use *kitchen spoons*. They do not provide exact measurements.
- When you give a liquid medication, be sure your syringe or cup matches the written directions. For example, the directions say give *2 teaspoons*. If the medicine cup or syringe has an ounce label, *call the doctor for new directions. Avoid guessing the correct amount.*
- Read the label at least three times before you give the medication.
- Always prepare the medicine in a well-lit area.
- Store all medicine in one area of the home. Avoid the bathroom because of humidity.
- Keep medications out of the reach of children. Lock a cabinet if possible.
- Keep all pet medications in a separate area.

Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital to help keep kids safe, healthy and happy.



Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.
1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week
www.parenthelpline.org



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