

Children & Household Medications

Keeping children safe is a parent's top priority in life. The home holds many dangers for a child that some people don't even really think about. One of the greatest dangers found in most households may be the contents of the medicine cabinet. Naturally curious children will explore everything, therefore a parent may wish to consider several safety precautions in order to protect their children from harmful substances.

CLEAN IT OUT. Go through your medicine cabinet and get rid of expired medications, samples you don't need, and pills you no longer use. Rather than flush unwanted drugs down the toilet or down the drain (which pollutes the water system), put them in the trash -- but make sure they're disposed of securely, so that a child can't get his hands on them.

LOCK IT UP. Check the caps on each bottle to ensure they're childproof. A childproof cap is challenging to open, such as one that requires you to push down and turn it at the same time. Discard any medicine that doesn't have a childproof cap and make sure all medicine caps are properly closed after each use. Some children can outsmart child proof bottles so as another precaution, keep your medications in a locked box (preferably one with a combination lock).

SET A GOOD EXAMPLE. Kids learn from watching, and if they see *you* taking pills, they'll want to emulate what you do. Be clear that medicine is something you take for illnesses and pains and that you take these things in limited doses.

CHOOSE YOUR WORDS. Children's medicine is designed to taste good so kids will want to take it. Avoid calling their vitamins or fever reducers "candy" so they don't confuse the two. Otherwise, they might like the flavor -- and, given the option, eat an entire bottle. But if you call medicine what it is, and explain that even though it tastes good, it's not candy, you can help them understand that they must take these substances in limited doses.

KEEP TRACK. If your child is sick or taking medicine, make sure every caregiver knows how much medicine to give and at what times so there is no risk of double-dosing. Keep a chart and have every caregiver sign off on the time they administered the last dose.



Tips for Parents and Caregivers

1. Don't give children adult medicines.
2. Talk to your health care professional first.
3. Choose child-resistant safety caps.
4. Check the active ingredients.
5. Follow the directions.
6. Understand that some over the counter medications only treat the symptoms.
7. Only use measuring devices made for measuring medicine.
8. Use your child's weight to find the right dose of medicine on the **DRUG FACTS** label.
9. If you don't know your child's weight, use their age to find the right dose.

Most liquid medicines are measured in teaspoons (tsp) and milliliters (mL).

5 mL = 1 teaspoon (tsp)

15 mL = 3 teaspoons = 1 tablespoon (tbsp)

30 mL = 1 fluid ounce (oz)