

# General advice about medicines

This leaflet gives general information about medicines for children.

Leaflets on individual medicines are available on the Medicines for Children website, [www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)



This leaflet has been written specifically about the use of medicines in children. The information may differ from that provided by the manufacturer of your child's medicine.

Please read this leaflet carefully.

## What is medicine?

The word medicine refers to any substance used to prevent or treat a medical condition.

## What are children's medicines available as?

Types of medicines available for children include:

- tablets
- capsules
- liquid medicine
- granules or powder
- lozenges
- liquid given by injection
- inhalers
- suppositories or enemas
- creams or ointments for skin
- eye drops or eye ointments
- ear drops
- patches.

You can read more information about types of children's medicines and how to give them on the Medicines for Children website, [www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)

## How much medicine should I give, and when should I give it?

Your doctor will work out the amount of medicine (the dose) that is right for *your* child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.

Your doctor or pharmacist will also tell you how often you need to give the medicine.

 Some medicines should be taken with food or milk. Other medicines work best on an empty stomach. There are a few medicines that should not be taken with certain foods, juices or milk. This should be shown on the medicine label. If you are not sure which food and drink your child should have with the medicine, speak with your doctor or pharmacist.

 It is important that you follow your doctor's instructions about how much medicine to give and when to give it.

## What if I forget to give it or give too much?

This depends on what type of medicine your child has. Detailed information about what to do is given in the leaflet for each medicine on the Medicines for Children website, [www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)

If you are concerned that you may have forgotten to give a dose or given your child too much, contact your doctor or NHS Direct (0845 4647 in England and Wales; 08454 24 24 24 in Scotland).

Have the medicine or packaging with you if you telephone for advice.

## Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they have other effects that we don't want (side-effects).

It is important to read about possible side-effects when getting a new medicine. Detailed information about side-effects is given in the leaflet for each medicine on our website, [www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)

## Can other medicines be given at the same time?

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist **before** giving any other medicines to your child. This includes herbal or complementary medicines, or medicines that you can buy over the counter.

## General advice about medicines

- Try to give medicines at about the same time(s) each day so that this becomes part of your child's daily routine, which will help you to remember.
- If you are not sure a medicine is working, contact your doctor but continue to give the medicine as usual in the meantime. Do not give extra doses as you may do harm.
- Only give the medicine to your child. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same, as this could do harm.
- If you think someone else may have taken the medicine by accident, contact your doctor straight away.
- Make sure that you always have enough medicine. Order a new prescription at least 2 weeks before you will run out.
- Make sure that medicine you have at home has not reached the 'best before' or 'use by' date on the packaging. Give old medicines to your pharmacist to dispose of.

## Where should I keep the medicine?

- Your doctor or pharmacist will tell you where to keep the medicine, for example, if it needs to be kept in a fridge.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

### Who to contact for more information

Your child's doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about your child's medicine.

You can also get useful information from:

#### **NHS Direct (England)**

0845 4647

[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

#### **NHS 24 (Scotland)**

08454 24 24 24

[www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)

#### **NHS Direct Wales/Galw Iechyd Cymru**

0845 4647

[www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk)

#### **NI Direct (Northern Ireland)**

[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

[www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)



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The primary source for the information in this leaflet is the British National Formulary for Children. For details on any other sources used for this leaflet, please contact us through our website, [www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)

We take great care to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct and up-to-date. However, medicines can be used in different ways for different patients. It is important that you ask the advice of your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure about something. This leaflet is about the use of these medicines in the UK, and may not apply to other countries. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG), WellChild and the contributors and editors cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of information, omissions of information, or any actions that may be taken as a consequence of reading this leaflet.