

## Tips for Giving Your Child Medication

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Taking medication can be difficult for some children. There are different ways that you can try to improve this experience for your child.

- Acknowledge that taking medicine can be difficult
- Provide information about the medicine
- Create structure and routine to medicine time
- Allow your child to have some choices when possible
- Praise your child for their efforts
- Do not hide medication in your child's favorite food or drink
- Never refer to medicine as candy
- Always store medication locked and out of the reach of children and teens
- If your child is unable to swallow pills, but interested in learning, speak to your child's psychosocial clinician or child life specialist
- If your child refuses to take the medicine, call a member of your child's healthcare team for guidance

### Giving Medicine to Infants (Birth-2 years)

- Give your baby liquid medicine using a medicine dropper or medicine syringe.

#### To give your baby medications using a medicine dropper or syringe:

1. Fill the dropper or syringe with the correct amount of medicine.
2. Hold your infant in a cradled position and gently pull down the chin while opening the child's mouth. Swaddling in a blanket can be helpful.
3. Gently place the dropper or syringe in your baby's mouth along the inside of the cheek and very slowly push the syringe to release the medicine.
4. Gently blowing on the face can trigger the swallow reflex in some infants.

### Giving Medication to Children Ages 2-5 Years

- Give medicine to children age 2-5 years with a medicine cup or syringe.
- Gently place the dropper or syringe in your child's mouth along the inside of the cheek and slowly push the syringe to release the medicine.
- If the medicine can be crushed, mix it applesauce, pudding, or yogurt. Only use a small amount to ensure your child takes all of their medicine.
- If pills can be dissolved, use a syringe to deliver the medicine to your child by mouth when dissolved in water or liquid.
- Chewable tablets can be given to children 2 years of age or older. Make sure your child chews and swallows all the medicine.

### Tips for Giving Your Child Medication

- Oral-disintegrating tablets can be given to children 2 years of age or older. Place oral-disintegrating tablet on your child's tongue or on the side of the cheek and let dissolve. Encourage your child to not chew the pill.
- For children this age, encouraging them to swallow the medicine and then gently blow out can prevent gagging.
- Make medicine time fun and playful
  - ❖ Include the child's favorite toy
  - ❖ Encourage medical play with stuffed animals
  - ❖ Distract with movie or TV show

## Giving Medication to Children Ages 5-12 Years

- At this age children can have a greater understanding about why they need to take medication.
- This may be a time when children start taking medication in pill form. If your child does not know how to swallow pills, talk to your child's psychosocial clinician.
- It is still important to give choices and to ask supportive questions.
  - ❖ "How can I help you take your medicine?"
  - ❖ "What do you need to get this done?"

## Giving Medication to Children Ages 12 Years and Up

- This age group can understand that taking their medication will help them feel better; they just don't always want to. Resistance to taking medication is normal at this age.
- It may be helpful to remind your teenager that taking their medication is not a choice but giving them options or rewards may help the process.
- While many teenagers want the independence of taking their medications, many still need parents to have oversight of the medicines.
- Creating a sense of teamwork with your teen can help minimize power struggles
  - ❖ Include your teenager in their care plan
  - ❖ Encourage choices and a sense of control. Your teenager can pick a pill box, for example, and you fill the pill box together.
- Having to take medicines makes teens "feel different" from their peers. Do what you can to eliminate the possibility that taking medicines interferes with social engagements/activities.

## Contact Us

**For patient care assistance, please call the following phone numbers:**

- Jimmy Fund Clinic (617) 632-3270  
Business Hours 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday
- Page Operator (617) 632-3352  
Off hours: weekdays after 5 p.m., holidays, and weekends  
Page pediatric hematology/oncology fellow on call
- Life Threatening Emergencies dial 911