

Administering Medication to Children



Reality Alert


A child at a home daycare facility was given aspirin after falling down, but the child suffered from an aspirin allergy which triggered an asthma attack. The child's aspirin allergy was known by his parents, but they didn't disclose it to the facility. The facility had permission to administer the child's inhaler in case of an asthma attack. The aspirin induced a reaction so severe the inhaler was ineffective in stopping the attack and emergency personnel were required to treat and stop the child's allergic reaction and asthma attack.

Each year, more and more children are taking prescription medications in the United States. Children are prescribed medications for a wide variety of conditions including asthma, diabetes, attention deficit, psychological disorders, and many more. Attention to detail is required to ensure that medication for these conditions is given correctly. Methods of administering medication include oral, eye drops, ear drops, inhalers, and injections.

As the number of children taking medications rises, so does the number of accidents involving improper doses, mixed-up prescriptions, and incorrect administration. The consequences of incorrectly administering medication can range from minor to life-threatening.

Safety Precautions

- No medication - including common over-the-counter medications - should be kept on-site for general use. Only medicine for use by a single child which was supplied by that child's parent or guardian should be used.
- All medication should be clearly labeled and stored in a locked cabinet or drawer. If the medication needs to be refrigerated make sure it's kept out of reach of children and kept secure.
- **Inspect prescription medication carefully.** All prescription medications should be in their original, child-proof containers and include:
 - The child's first and last name;
 - The physician's name and contact information;
 - The filled date and expiration date; and
 - Instructions for administering, storing, and disposing the medication.
- **Inspect over-the-counter medication.** Over-the-counter medication should contain:
 - A label with the child's first and last name;
 - The date given to the facility and the expiration date;
 - Instructions for administering, storing, and disposing the medication; and
 - The name and contact information of the health care professional who recommended the medication.
- Never give a child a medication that was prescribed for someone else. This policy applies to siblings and should also be applied to over-the-counter medications.
- **Use proper measuring utensils** when administering medications and make sure they're thoroughly cleaned after every use.
- Always **review medication instructions with parents** before administering any medications to make sure they're administered properly. For example, some medications require being taken with meals and others are meant to be given at specific times of the day.

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- If you have any questions or concerns, **consult the child's parents**, guardians, doctor, or pharmacist.
 - If any medication requires injections, make sure there's a trained professional capable of giving the medication. If no professional is available, inform the parents the medication cannot be administered.

Policies & Procedures for Administering Medicine to Children

- 1) Permission Form: Consent forms completed and signed by parents detailing what specific medications can be given to children and when they can be given.
- 2) Medication Administration Form: These forms should be used to document every time a medication was administered and if the child showed any reactions to the medication
- 3) Medical Information Form: Completed by parents when children are registered for programs. They should contain all pertinent medical information, known allergies, and contacts. Also, a child with diagnosed allergies should be encouraged to wear a medical ID bracelet as an extra precaution.