

Pointers For Parents

Giving Medicine To Children: What You Should Know

(NAPSA)—When your child has a fever, a cold, the flu, or any other common ailment, what should you do? According to the National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPPIE), parents need to “Be MedWise” by following these important steps when giving over-the-counter (OTC) medicines to infants and children:

Only Use Medicines Formulated For Infants And Children. Because children’s metabolisms are very different than those of adults, certain medicines are specially formulated for babies’ and children’s weight and age. Never cut adult-strength tablets in half or try to estimate a child’s dose of an adult-strength liquid. This can result in an accidental overdose. Similarly, giving older children liquid medicines that are especially formulated for babies can also lead to dosing errors.

Always Use The Dosing Device Packaged With The Medicine. To make sure that infants and children get the intended dose of an OTC medicine, use the specific dropper, dosing cup or other device that comes with your child’s medicine. Never use kitchen spoons or other home utensils to measure medicine doses. This could result in giving dangerous, inaccurate doses. Also, never use a dosing device from another children’s medicine.

Know Your Child’s Weight. Most pediatricians and pharmacists agree that the child’s weight is the best way to determine the correct dose. For this reason, health professionals often recommend that parents keep an accurate scale in the house so that they can weigh the child before giving OTC medicines.

Compare Ingredients When Giving More Than One OTC Medicine. Read the “Drug Facts” label on each product and compare the active ingredients and uses. Many cough and cold preparations contain the same active ingredient as pain relievers,



Questions about giving over-the-counter medicines to children? Ask your physician or pharmacist.

which means it is possible to give your child two different products that contain the same active ingredient without realizing it. To play it safe, check the label first and only give your child one OTC medicine at a time that contains a specific active ingredient unless advised to do so by a health care professional.

Follow The Directions On The Label Carefully. Before giving your child any OTC product, always read the label information. This way, you’ll be certain you have selected the right product, understand the dosing instructions, and are aware of any warnings or precautions.

When In Doubt, Ask First. Your child’s health is too important for guesswork. If you have questions about which OTC medicine is best for your child or how and when to give the medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist first.

To help consumers learn the facts about the safe use of OTC medicines, NCPPIE has launched a new public education campaign called *Be MedWise*. For more solutions-oriented information, visit the Web site at www.bemedwise.org.