

Medicines for Children – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

FAQs about giving medicines	
<p>How do I know how much medicine to give to my child?</p>	<p>For a medicine that has been prescribed for your child, the amount to give will be shown on the label on the medicine packet or bottle. It is important that you follow these instructions rather than the information given in the leaflet that comes with the medicine (if there is one).</p> <p>If the medicine was bought from a chemist or shop (rather than being prescribed for your child), follow the instructions on the packaging or the leaflet inside the packaging. Guidance is usually based on age (e.g. children under 12 years).</p> <p>If you are not sure how much to give, check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist, or the person who prescribed the medicine.</p>
<p>Does my child have to take tablets/capsules with water?</p>	<p>In most cases, your child can take tablets/capsules with any cold drink. However, some medicines should not be taken with milk – it will tell you on the label if this is the case.</p> <p>Tablets/capsules should not be swallowed with hot drinks because the coating may dissolve.</p> <p>Your child should <i>always</i> have something to drink when they take a tablet or capsule; they should not be swallowed dry.</p> <p>After swallowing the tablet/capsule, your child should drink some more, to ensure the tablet/capsule has been swallowed completely.</p> <p>The Medicines for Children website provides more information about how to give tablets and how to give capsules.</p>
<p>What can I do if my child can't swallow tablets?</p>	<p>Medicines for Children have an information leaflet giving advice about how to help your child swallow tablets, available here.</p> <p>You can try putting the tablet in a teaspoon of a soft food that your child can swallow <i>without chewing</i>, such as yogurt, mashed potato or apple sauce.</p> <p>You can crush some tablets and mix the granules with a small amount of soft food (e.g., jam, yogurt, mashed potato). The medicine information leaflet will tell you whether a particular type of tablet can be crushed, or check the leaflet for that medicine on the Medicines for Children website.</p> <p>Your child should swallow the food and crushed tablet immediately, without chewing.</p>
<p>Can tablets or liquid medicine be taken with food?</p>	<p>In most cases, medicines can be taken before, during or after a meal.</p> <p>However, some medicines must be taken on an empty stomach to work properly. Other medicines must only be taken after food, to</p>

	<p>protect the stomach from irritation. If there are any specific requirements, this will be stated on the medicine label.</p> <p>You can also check the leaflet for that medicine on the Medicines for Children website.</p>
Can I crush tablets and mix them with food?	<p>This depends on the particular medicine. We recommend that you check the information leaflet for the medicine your child is taking. You can also check the leaflet for that medicine on the Medicines for Children website.</p>
Can I use a kitchen teaspoon to give liquid medicine?	<p>No. Kitchen teaspoons vary in size so your child may not get the right amount of medicine. You can get medicine spoons or oral syringes from your pharmacy.</p>
I have forgotten to give my child their medicine. What should I do?	<p>This depends on how often you usually give your child their medicine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you usually give it once a day in the morning: Give the missed dose when you remember during the day, as long as this is at least 12 hours before the next dose is due. • If you usually give it once a day in the evening: If you remember before bedtime, give the missed dose. You do not need to wake up a sleeping child to give a missed dose. You can give the missed dose in the morning, as long as this is at least 12 hours before the evening dose is due. • If you usually give it twice a day: If you remember up to 4 hours after you should have given a dose, give your child the missed dose. For example, if you usually give a dose at about 7 am, you can give the missed dose at any time up to 11 am. If you remember after that time, do not give the missed dose. Just give the next dose as usual. • If you usually give it three times a day: Do not give the missed dose. Just give the next dose as usual. <p>You can also check the leaflet for that medicine on the Medicines for Children website.</p>
What do I do if my child is sick (vomits) after taking their medicine?	<p>In most cases, if your child is sick (vomits) more than 30 minutes after taking tablets or liquid medicine, they do not need another dose.</p> <p>If they are sick less than 30 minutes after taking tablets or liquid medicine, give the same dose again.</p> <p>You can also check the leaflet for that medicine on the Medicines for Children website.</p>
What do mL and mg mean?	<p>mL (or ml) is short for millilitres, which is a unit of volume. A standard medicine spoon has a small end that holds 2.5 mL of medicine and a larger end that holds 5 mL. The volume in mL is marked on an oral syringe.</p> <p>mg is short for milligrams, which is a unit of mass or weight. The amount of drug in a tablet (or in a given volume of medicine) is given in mg.</p>
I think I may have given my child an extra dose of	<p>This depends on the medicine. Check the information leaflet that came with the medicine (if there was one). You can also check the leaflet for that medicine on the Medicines for Children website.</p>

medicine by mistake. What should I do?	If you are concerned, contact your doctor, practice nurse or pharmacist for advice.
FAQs about my child's treatment	
How often should my child's medicines be reviewed?	This depends on the medicine your child is taking, how long they are taking it for and the condition they are being treated for. If you think your child's medicines need to be reviewed, ask for an appointment with your doctor or prescriber.
Who is "the prescriber" referred to in the Medicines for Children's leaflets?	A "prescriber" is someone who is legally allowed to write a prescription for a medicine. This could be a doctor, a specialist nurse or a specialist pharmacist.
I don't think my child's medicine is working. What should I do?	It may not be obvious whether a medicine is helping, and some medicines take a while to work. Continue to give the medicine as instructed by the prescriber. Do not give your child extra medicine. If you are concerned, contact your doctor / nurse or the person who prescribed the medicine.
Can I give my child ibuprofen or paracetamol whilst taking another medicine?	It is usually safe to give ibuprofen or paracetamol to your child alongside prescribed medicines. It is a good idea to check the information leaflet that comes with the medicine (if there is one). You can also check the leaflet for that medicine on the Medicines for Children website. If you are not sure, ask your doctor, nurse, a pharmacist or the person who prescribed the medicine.
Why is my child taking a different dose from my friend's child?	The dose that your child needs depends on their illness or condition they are being treated for, which might be different from another child, even if they appear to be the same. It is important that you follow the instructions on the medicine packet for your child.
FAQs about safety concerns	
I think someone else has taken my child's medicine. What should I do?	Contact your doctor / pharmacist / nurse / prescriber straight away.
FAQs about storing and disposing of medicines	
Where should I keep medicines?	Most medicines can be kept at room temperature. If a medicine needs to be kept in the fridge, this will be stated on the label. All medicines should be kept out of the sight and reach of young children.
Does my child's medicine need to be kept in the fridge?	This depends on the medicine. If it does need to be kept in the fridge, this will be stated on the label. You can also check the leaflet for that medicine on the Medicines for Children website.

What should I do with out-of-date medicines?	<p>Take these to your local pharmacy to be disposed of.</p> <p>Do not put old medicines in the dustbin or flush them down the toilet.</p>
The medicine I have at home is out of date and I don't have any more. What should I do?	<p>Contact your prescriber for a repeat prescription immediately.</p> <p>If it is out of hours, go to your local pharmacy, taking the empty medicine packet with you; they may be able to give you enough medicine for the period while you wait for the prescription. In some cases, you may be charged for this medicine.</p> <p>Whilst we recommend that medicines are not used when out of date, if it is only 1 or 2 days, it may be better to give the out-of-date medicine to your child, rather than not giving any medicine. We recommend that you talk to your prescriber, or contact NHS Choices.</p>
Other sources of information	
Who should I contact if I have a question about my child's health or the medicine they are taking?	<p>You should contact your health centre who will put you in contact with the right person: a doctor, nurse or specialist nurse.</p> <p>You can discuss medicines with your community pharmacist (at your local pharmacy).</p>
The information on your leaflet is different from that on the label. Which should I follow?	<p>Follow the instructions on the medicine label if the medicine has been prescribed to your child. If you are unsure, contact your health centre or community pharmacist.</p> <p>Note that the information provided on the leaflet that comes in the medicine box mostly relates to adults, whereas Medicines for Children leaflets provide information specifically relating to children, which might be different.</p>
Information I have found on the internet is different from the information on your leaflets. Why is this?	<p>The internet has many sources of information; many of these have not been written by fully trained professionals. We recommend that you only use information from trusted sources. Look for the "Information Standard" mark, which assures you that the information is correct and up to date.</p> <div data-bbox="1161 1317 1366 1429" style="text-align: right;">  </div> <p>Our leaflets are written by doctors and pharmacists and reviewed regularly (every 3 years) for accuracy.</p>
The information in the leaflet that came with the medicine is different from the information on the Medicines for Children leaflet. Which should I follow?	<p>The information leaflet that comes with a medicine (usually inside the box) mostly relates to adults, whereas Medicines for Children leaflets provide information relating specifically to children, which may be different. You should refer to the Medicines for Children leaflet about use of the medicine in children. If you are unsure, contact your health centre or community pharmacist.</p>
How do I know that the information on Medicines for Children is reliable?	<p>Medicines for Children is a certified member of NHS England's Information Standard, which indicates that information is checked regularly for accuracy. This is shown by this symbol.</p> <div data-bbox="1200 1809 1404 1921" style="text-align: right;">  </div> <p>Our leaflets are written by doctors and pharmacists and reviewed regularly (every 3 years) for accuracy.</p>

FAQs about the Medicines for Children website

Who are the leaflets for?	The information leaflets have been written for parents and carers. They can also be useful to young people.
Do I have to pay for the leaflets?	No. All the leaflets can be downloaded free of charge from our website.
Who writes the leaflets?	<p>Leaflets are developed according to a rigorous eight-step process.</p> <p>They are written by volunteer authors who are trained paediatricians (children’s doctors), pharmacists, or other qualified health professionals (e.g. psychologists or nurses). The leaflets are reviewed by a medical editor, the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health’s Medicines Committee, and parents/carers from the children’s charity WellChild.</p> <p>Our process and content is certified by the Information Standard.</p> <p>Pharmaceutical companies are NOT involved in the writing or reviewing of leaflets.</p>
Who is the team behind the Medicines for Children project?	<p>Medicines for Children is run in partnership of three organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) • the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG) • the children’s charity WellChild. <p>You can read more about these organisations here.</p> <p>The Medicines for Children project has been running for 10 years and is led by a small team of UK-based paediatricians and pharmacists, who give their time and expertise on a voluntary basis, in addition to their existing clinical work commitments.</p>
How do I know that the information on Medicines for Children is reliable?	<p>Medicines for Children is a certified member of NHS England’s Information Standard, which ensures that information has been checked regularly for accuracy. This is shown by this symbol</p> 
How do I know the information is up-to-date?	All Medicines for Children information leaflets are reviewed at least every 3 years. Leaflets may be updated sooner if relevant information emerges or guidance about a particular medicine changes.
You do not have a leaflet about the medicine my child is taking. What can I do?	<p>The Medicines for Children website has over 200 leaflets covering the most commonly prescribed children’s medicines and some less common ones.</p> <p>If Medicines for Children does not currently have a leaflet for the medicine your child is taking, please refer to the information leaflet provided within the medicine box. A relevant patient support organisation may also be able to help.</p> <p>You can ask your pharmacist, doctor, nurse or the person who prescribed the medicine for specific information.</p>
Is your website funded by pharmaceutical companies?	No. The Medicines for Children website is funded by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), the children’s charity WellChild and the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG).

	We do not receive funding from any drug/pharmaceutical companies and they do not provide any comment on the content.
FAQs about the Medicines for Children website for healthcare professionals	
As a health care professional, can I give out copies of the leaflets to my patients?	Yes. Please do print and share, or email to your patients.
Can the hospital / GP surgery where I work post links to Medicines for Children's leaflets on our website?	Yes. Please do share links to medicines leaflets or pages within the Medicines for Children website that could be useful to your patients.
Do you have leaflets in other languages?	We do not offer medicines leaflets in other languages yet, with the exception of a leaflet about fluoxetine in Polish. We are hoping to translate more leaflets and would be pleased to work with NHS Trusts or other organisations that would like to fund the translation of particular leaflets.
How can I get involved in writing leaflets?	<p>We are pleased to hear from health care professionals who would like to write a leaflet. Please contact us via the Medicines for Children website or at Medicines.Leadlets@rcpch.ac.uk.</p> <p>It usually takes our authors 1–2 hours to write a leaflet, and 30–45 minutes to review an existing leaflet. We provide authors with a detailed template; the information in the leaflets is largely based on the <i>British National Formulary for Children</i> and the author's own experience.</p>
I am a trainee. Can I get involved?	Yes, as long as you have a consultant who is willing to review your work.
Do you develop leaflets for children and young people?	Our leaflets are written for parents and carers and may also be useful to young people. The Medicines for Children team are currently working with children and young people from around the UK to develop medicines information leaflets specifically to meet the needs of young people. Please contact us if you would like to be involved in this work.