



Talking about medicines with healthcare professionals

When your child is prescribed a new medicine, you may want to know more about it. Healthcare professionals are encouraged to discuss their choices with parents/carers. They should explain why they have prescribed the new medicine, how it is expected to help your child, and how you will know if it is working. They should also explain how to give the medicine. They should tell you what to do if you have concerns about whether the medicine is working, or if it is causing side effects.

It can be difficult during an appointment to think of questions you want to ask to, especially if your child has just been given a diagnosis or a new treatment. We have prepared this information sheet to help you talk with healthcare professionals about medicines your child is taking. You may not want to ask all the questions – you can tick the ones that are important to you. You may want to print this sheet out, or have it ready on your phone, during your conversations with healthcare professionals, to help you remember.

If you don't understand what you have been told, do ask your healthcare professional to explain again. It is important that you feel confident to give the medicine to your child correctly. If you are unsure, worried or have particular concerns, be sure to raise these with your healthcare professional.

The website medicinesforchildren.org.uk provides information about more than 200 medicines that are given to children. The information answers many questions. You may want to refer to our leaflets, and use the information as the basis for a conversation with your healthcare professional.

Questions about the choice of treatment

You may want to understand why your child has been prescribed a particular medicine, and what other options have been considered.

Why have you prescribed this medicine?
Why did you decide on this particular medicine?
Is there an alternative treatment?
How likely is this medicine to help my child?
What might happen if they don't take it?
Does my child have to stop any other medicines?

Notes

More about the medicine

You may want to understand how the medicine works, and whether you will see any difference in your child.

It is important to understand how long it takes for the medicine to work, as most medicines have to be taken for a few days before they start to work. The effect may not be obvious to you.

How does the medicine work?
How will the medicine help my child?
How quickly will the medicine make a difference?
How will we know if the medicine is working?
How will you check that the medicine is working?
For how long will my child need to take this medicine?
What should I do if I'm concerned about whether the medicine is working?

Notes

Giving the medicine

It is important that you understand when and how to give the medicine to your child. If you are not sure, ask your healthcare professional to explain.

When should I give this medicine to my child?
How much should I give?
How do I give it?
What should I do if I forget to give it?
What should I do if I think I may have given too much?
Does it matter whether I give it before or after food?

Notes

Side effects

Most medicines have some unwanted effects, called side effects. These are often mild and don't last long. However, it is important that you understand what to expect.

	Is this medicine likely to cause side-effects?
	What should I do if side-effects are making my child feel poorly?
	How long might the side-effects last?
	Is the medicine likely to make my child sleepy?
	Are there any activities they should avoid (e.g. driving, sporting activities)

Notes

Questions your healthcare professional should ask you

Your healthcare professional should ask you some important questions before prescribing a new medicine.

	Are you happy for your child to have this medicine?
	Are you confident you know to give this medicine to your child?

If your child is already taking any medicines, or has any allergies, check that the healthcare professional knows this.

Notes

Who to contact for more information

England: NHS 111

Tel 111

www.nhs.uk

Scotland: NHS 24

Tel 111

www.nhs24.com

Wales: NHS 111 Wales

Tel 111

www.111.wales.nhs.uk

Northern Ireland: NI Direct

www.nidirect.gov.uk

If you look for more information about medicines, make sure it is from a reliable source.

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk