



MEDICINES INFORMATION

For Parents and Carers taking babies home with medicines.

Every parent/carer taking a baby home on medicines can worry about getting things wrong. This resource has been designed by both parents/carers and healthcare professionals to help with any questions you have about medicines.



About this booklet



These resources were produced by parents and healthcare professionals who took part in the PADDINGToN study (PArent co-Designed Drug INformation for parents and Guardians Taking Neonates home).

Deciding what medicine to prescribe, how much should be taken and when it should be taken is the responsibility of the healthcare professional who prescribes the medicine (for example your doctor, nurse or pharmacist) at all times. If you have been given instructions by your doctor, nurse or pharmacist that are different to what is said in this booklet, you should follow their instructions and not what is said in this booklet.

If you are ever in doubt or concerned about the health of your child you should obtain advice from your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. You should dial 111 if you need help straight away. **In an emergency you should call 999 or go to A&E.**



The information in this booklet is endorsed by the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group.



The Medicines for Children website contains information about medicines written by doctors and pharmacists who specialise in treating children. It is endorsed by Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG) and WellChild.

How to identify information:



Information provided on the Medicines for Children [website](#).



Written information (leaflet or web page).



Video



If you would like to provide any feedback on how these resources could be improved, please email us on PMRU@alderhey.nhs.uk, scan the QR code, or visit this link <https://bit.ly/Contact-paediatric-medicines-research-unit-Alder-Hey>

Please note:

Our information sometimes differs from information provided in the manufacturer's leaflet that comes with the medicine. If you are unsure, check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Contents

- 03 General advice about giving medicines
- 04 Giving medicines to your baby
- 07 Information about specific medicines
- 09 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- 17 Useful contacts
- 18 Medicines Administration Record
- 19 Disclaimer & Acknowledgements

General advice on medicines

- * Try to give medicines at about the same times each day, to help you remember.
- * Giving medication to another child could cause harm. Only give this medicine to your child. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same.
- * If you think someone else may have taken the medicine by accident, contact your doctor for advice.
- * Make sure that you always have enough medicine. Order a new prescription at least 2 weeks before you will run out.
- * Make sure that the medicines you have at home have not reached the 'best before' or 'use by' date on the packaging. Give expired medicines, or those you no longer need, to your pharmacist for disposal.
- * All medicines should be stored out of the reach and sight of children.
- * You may need to keep some medicines in the fridge – check the instructions on the packaging.
- * Liquid medicines do not keep for long after the bottle has been opened. Write the date that you open it on the bottle and make sure you follow the instructions on the bottle about how long you can keep it for.

Giving medicines to your baby

Giving liquid medicines to your baby.



Wash your hands with soap and water.



Read the instructions on the medicine label.

Does the label say to shake the bottle? Check the expiry or use-by date. Once you have opened the bottle it may need to be discarded after a certain time.



The dose is written on the label.

There might be a few numbers e.g. "Give 6mL (3mg)."
The amount in **mL (ml)** is the volume (amount) to give.



Make sure you have the correct size and type of syringe to measure the dose (as shown by your nurse/pharmacist).



Some medicines are provided with a bung for the bottle.

If you have a bung use this to help you remove the correct dose of medicine from the bottle. Pull the medicine into the syringe making sure that the **top black line** of the plunger is at the volume of medicine you need. Put the top back on the medicine bottle when you have given the dose.



Put the syringe into your child's mouth, aim towards the inside of their cheek.

Slowly press the plunger until it won't go any further. There may be a small amount of medicine left in the tip of the syringe. Do not try to give this to the baby as this may give too much.



You may wish to give your baby a drink to wash down the medicine.

Don't give milk if the medicine label says this should be avoided. If you have been told it is OK to mix the medicine with milk, do this with a small amount of milk only (e.g. 5mL).



Most syringes can be re-used.

This will be stated on the packaging. If the syringe can be re-used, wash your syringe in warm soapy water after each use so it is ready for the next time you need it. Leave to dry. Use a new syringe each week. Bungs can stay in the bottle until it is finished or the course is complete.



Store the medicine in a safe place, away from children.



Check for any special storage instructions.

Store the medicine in the fridge if the label says so.



If you have any questions, ask your pharmacist, nurse or doctor.

You can find detailed information on how to use oral syringes on the Medicines for Children website. Scan the QR code, or visit the links below.



[How to use an oral syringe](#) 🌈



[How to use an oral syringe](#) 🌈



[How to give medicines down a gastrostomy tube](#) 🌈



[How to give medicines down a naso-gastric tube](#) 🌈



SCAN OR SEARCH

<https://bit.ly/MFC-giving-medicines>

Mixing liquid medicines with milk or feeds











Some medicines should not be mixed with milk or feeds. Please check with your nurse or pharmacist.

If you are mixing medicine with milk or feeds, **never** add to a full bottle. This is to make sure your baby receives the full dose of medicine they require.

If you are mixing medicines with milk or feeds, add the dose of medicine to a small amount (e.g. 5mL) of feed/milk immediately before you give it. Do not prepare ahead of time. Make sure feeds are cool before adding a medicine. Do not add more than one medicine to milk or feed at the same time.

How to give medicines to your baby in different ways

The Medicines for Children website has information about giving medicines in other ways. Use the QR code or visit the links below:

-  [How to give creams and ointments](#) 
-  [How to give granules and powders](#) 
-  [How to give ear drops](#) 
-  [How to give eye drops and eye ointment](#) 
-  [How to give rectal medicines](#) 



Information about specific medicines

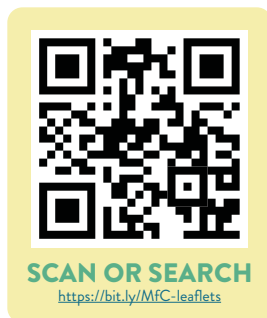
Some of the most common medicines which are given to babies after leaving hospital are shown on the next page. Visit the [link](#) or scan the QR code to find the information on the Medicines for Children website. 🌈

A-Z of medicines

On the Medicines for Children website medicines are listed in alphabetical order or can be identified from the search box using generic or brand name.

Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist whether these medicines are available from your GP and community pharmacist. This may differ depending on which area you live in.

For more information see FAQ How do I get further supplies of medicine after discharge?




Click the links to find more detailed information about these medicines:

Medicine	Likely to be needed when your baby goes home? (yes/no)	Available from GP & Community Pharmacy? (yes/no)
Calcium supplements		
Carobel		
Colecalciferol (Vitamin D)		
Chlorothiazide		
Folic acid		
Furosemide		
Gaviscon		
Sodium Ferredetate		
Lactulose		
Levetiracetam		
Multivitamins (Abidec® or Dalivit®)		
Omeprazole		
Paracetamol		
Phenobarbital		
Phosphate supplements		
Propranolol		
Sildenafil		
Sodium chloride		
Spironolactone		
Trimethoprim		
Ursodeoxycholic acid		

Add any other medicines your baby may require in the spaces above.

Frequently Asked Questions

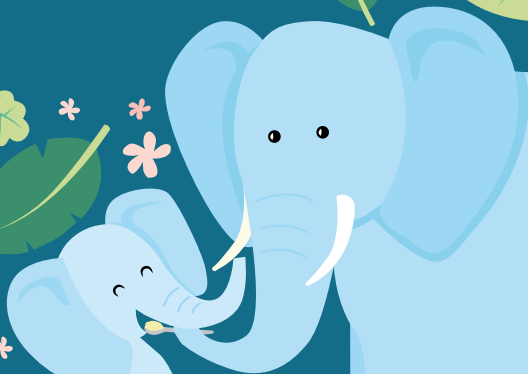
We included questions that parents and carers are likely to think about following discharge from hospital. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to provide specific answers to questions as each individual situation may differ, but we have tried to be as helpful as possible.

Answers to some of these questions are available on the Medicines for Children website, accessible by this [link](#) or QR code. 



SCAN OR SEARCH

<https://bit.ly/MFC-FAQs>



General information about medicines

How do I know how much medicine to give my baby?

If the medicine was **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 manufacturer's leaflet that comes with the medicine if there is one.

If the medicine was **bought from a pharmacy 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 2 years.

If you are not sure how much to give, check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist, or the person who prescribed the medicine.

What do mL and mg mean?

mL (or ml) is short for millilitres which is a unit of volume used for liquid medicines. The volume in mL is marked on an oral syringe.

The dose (amount) of a liquid medicine to give is usually stated in mL (or ml) on the label. If both **mg** and **mL** are on the label, use the dose in **mL** to measure the dose.

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.

I don't think my baby's medicine is working – what shall 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 doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Do not give your child extra medicine as this may cause harm. If you are concerned, contact your doctor/nurse/pharmacist or the person who prescribed the medicine.

Should the dose of my baby's medication change as their weight changes?

The doses of some medicines will be changed as your baby's weight changes to ensure they have the best effect.

The doses of other medicines may not be changed as the effect of the medicine is not related to the size of the baby, or the person prescribing the medicine may be testing whether your baby can manage without the medicine.

If the dose needs to be changed, the person prescribing the medicine will tell you the new dose to give.

If you do not receive a new bottle of medicine when the dose changes you will need to make a note of the new dose/volume and tell others who care for your baby.



Problems with medicines

I think I may have given my baby an extra dose by mistake. What should I do? 🌟

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, available via the A-Z search on the Medicines for Children [information page](#).

If there is no information in the leaflet or on Medicines for Children, or you are concerned, contact your doctor, nurse or pharmacist for advice.

Can I report my baby developing a side-effect to their medicine? 🌟

Let your doctor, nurse or pharmacist know if your child experiences a side-effect to a medicine. You can also report this to the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency in the UK. Use this [link](#).

What do I do if my baby is sick (vomits) after taking their medicine or spits it out? 🌟

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.

In most cases, if they are sick less than 30 minutes after taking tablets or liquid medicine, you can give the same dose again.

It is best to check the leaflet for your baby's medicine on the Medicines for Children website for more detailed advice. If they have taken some of the dose but spat or dribbled out the rest, do not give another dose as it is difficult to assess how much they have taken and we don't want them to receive more than they need.

Check the leaflet for the specific medicine on the Medicines for Children website, available via the A-Z search on the Medicines for Children [information page](#).

I have forgotten to give my baby their medicine – what should I do?

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, available via the A-Z search on the Medicines for Children [information page](#).

If there is no information in the leaflet or on Medicines for Children, or you are concerned, contact your doctor, nurse or pharmacist for advice. The information below can be used for guidance:

- * **If you usually give the medicine 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 the medicine 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 the medicine 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 the medicine three times a day:** Do not give the missed dose. Just give the next dose as usual.

Giving medicines

How do I manage soluble, effervescent (“fizzy”) or dispersible tablets?

Read the instructions carefully on the label of your baby’s medication. It will tell you how many tablets to dissolve in how much water.

Fill a sterilised bottle with boiled water and allow to cool for approximately 30 minutes before use. Prepare a fresh bottle of boiled and cooled water each day and store it in the fridge between uses.

Measure the correct amount of boiled and cooled water in a medicine pot. Add the tablet and leave it for about 5 minutes to dissolve. Then use an empty syringe to stir the mixture until the tablet has dissolved. Measure the dose for your child using an oral syringe.

Throw away any remaining mixture and wash the medicine pot with warm soapy water and allow to dry between uses. Throw away any boiled and cooled water after 24 hours and prepare a new batch.

What time of day should I give medicines? Does it matter if I give a medicine a bit earlier or later than planned?

Try to give medicines at the same time each day. The timing of most medicines can be adjusted by 1-2 hours before or after their regular time if this fits better with your baby's routine.

Generally, give medicines before a feed where possible as your baby is more likely to take them when they are hungry. Some should be taken after food. Check the label on the medicine.

Mornings are often best for medicines which are only given **once a day** as it is easier to remember to give the dose, however the timing of some medicines (e.g. iron, folic acid, multivitamins) is not important.

Trimethoprim is best given at night-time when used to prevent urine infections.

Give medicines that are prescribed **twice a day** in the morning and at bedtime (e.g. Chlorothiazide, Furosemide, Lactulose, Levetiracetam, Phenobarbital, Spironolactone).

Most medicines that are prescribed **three times a day** can be given at breakfast time, lunchtime and at bedtime (e.g. propranolol, ursodeoxycholic acid). The timing of some medicines may need to be quite specific, and you should aim to give them approximately every 8 hours (e.g. sildenafil). Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will advise you whether the time between doses of your medicine is critical.

Medicines that are prescribed **four times a day** may need a dose to be given after your baby has gone to bed. Most medicines can be given at breakfast time, lunchtime, with evening meal and then at approximately 10pm rather than exactly every 6 hours. Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will advise you whether the time between doses of the medicine is critical and whether to wake your baby to give medicine.

Is my baby's medicine "critical"?

Medicines are only prescribed if the team looking after your baby think that the treatment will be of benefit. Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will advise you whether the timing of doses of your baby's medicine is critical. If you forget to give a dose of some medicines, this may not cause serious consequences, for more information see **FAQ I have forgotten to give my child their medicine – what should I do.**

What do I need to be aware of when I start giving my baby a medicine by mouth rather than down their nasogastric (NG) or gastrostomy (PEG) tube?

See pages 4 & 5 for advice about giving medicines into your baby's mouth rather than a tube.

Specific medicines

Why do some babies get Dalivit® and some get Abidec®?

Abidec® and Dalivit® are similar multivitamin products given to premature babies who may have lower stores and higher requirements for vitamins than those born at term. Different hospitals use different products. Occasionally there are supply problems with medicines. If Abidec® is unavailable your baby might be given Dalivit® and vice versa. Give the same dose as you were giving with the other product.

How long does my baby need to take vitamins, iron and folic acid?

Your baby should stay on vitamins, folic acid and iron until he/she is around one year old and is fully weaned with a well-balanced diet. They may then take a multivitamin preparation you can buy.

How long will my baby need to take medications?

The length of time your baby needs to take each medicine will depend on lots of different factors. Ask your doctor at each clinic whether each of the medicines is still required.

Can I give my baby paracetamol while they are taking other medicines?

It is usually safe to give 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, available via the A-Z search on them [Medicines for Children information page](#).

If you are not sure, ask your doctor, nurse, a pharmacist, or the person who prescribed the medicine.

Can my premature baby have paracetamol with their vaccinations?

If paracetamol has been **prescribed and dispensed for your child**, the amount to give will be shown on the label on the medicine bottle.

If the paracetamol was **bought from a pharmacy or a shop** the dose for vaccinations on the label may not be appropriate for your baby because they are likely to be smaller than a term baby of the same age. Paracetamol is safe to give, but your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will need to calculate the dose based on your baby's weight.

Storing medicines

What if a medicine is left out of the fridge or in the fridge by mistake?

Check the label on the packaging. Some medicines which are usually kept in the fridge can be stored at room temperature for a short time. If there is no information about this on the label contact your doctor for a new prescription immediately. Contact your pharmacy at the same time so they can ensure they have a supply available.

Further supplies of medicines

Why is it important to stick with the same strength of a liquid medicine?

The amount/volume of liquid medicine containing your baby's dose is calculated based on the strength of the medicine. If the strength changes, the amount/volume you need to give changes too. This can cause confusion and mistakes, so it is important to stay with the same strength.

When should I order further supplies from the pharmacy?

Wherever possible, give your pharmacy 2 weeks' notice to get your medicines ready. Some medicines have short expiry dates. Talk to your pharmacy about how best these medicines are ordered and dispensed.



How do I get further supplies of medicine after discharge?

When your baby leaves hospital on medicines there are a few questions you may need to ask about getting more supplies:

Is this medicine only available from the hospital?

Some medicines are not available from your GP or community pharmacy. There are lots of reasons for this, for example,

- * If this is a new medicine or a high-cost medicine which can only be prescribed by specialists;
- * If this is an unlicensed medicine (visit this [link](#) for more information).

If ongoing supply of the medicine is from the hospital, there will need to be a plan for prescribing and collection. Ask the pharmacy team, nurse or doctor about how this will work for you.

Will this medicine be supplied by the hospital at first but then move to being available from my GP and community pharmacist?

Some medicines need to be monitored at the beginning but, once treatment has stabilised, then prescribing and dispensing can happen in the community.

Some of these medicines may not be regularly stocked in your community pharmacy so it is a good idea to ensure prescriptions get to them in good time, so they have the medicine available when you need it.

Ask the pharmacy team whether the medicine is likely to be available easily in the community or not.

What if my GP refuses to prescribe this medicine?

Some GPs are not familiar with specific medicines and may refer prescribing back to the hospital. Sometimes a medicine should have been continued by the hospital (see above).

In these cases, contact your hospital pharmacy or clinical team and they can either provide the medicine or contact your GP with more information to support them prescribing these medicines for your baby.



Useful contacts

- * Local [Hospital to insert]
 - Parents and Families – North West Neonatal Operational Delivery Network neonatalnetwork.co.uk
- * Emergency [Hospital to insert]
- * Parent support groups [Hospital to insert more]
 - www.Bliss.org.uk
 - Irish Neonatal Health Alliance www.inha.ie
 - NeoMates on facebook and twitter
 - Spoons Neonatal Family Support www.spoons.org.uk

Hospital name

Hospital logo

Contact number: XXXX XXX XXXX

Medicines Administration Record

If your baby is taking lots of medicines, you might find it helpful to use a chart to tick off when you have given doses – you could print out or photocopy page 18.

Medicines Administration Record (MAR)

Baby's name: _____

Week commencing: _____

Medicine	Time	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Comments
Medicine name:	:								
Dose:	:								
Medicine name:	:								
Dose:	:								
Medicine name:	:								
Dose:	:								
Medicine name:	:								
Dose:	:								
Medicine name:	:								
Dose:	:								
Medicine name:	:								
Dose:	:								

Adapted from An Interactive Guide to [What good looks like for assisted medicines taking](#)

Contributors to the development of these resources:



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