

How to give calcium, phosphate or potassium using effervescent tablets




Children may need extra calcium, phosphate or potassium for a variety of reasons. If liquid medicine is available, you may need to make a mixture by dispersing (dissolving) an effervescent tablet in water and giving your child some of this mixture. This leaflet explains how to do this.

Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will tell you:

- how many tablets to use
- the amount of water to disperse the tablet(s) in, written in millilitres or mL
- the amount (dose) to give your child, in mL.

The information will be shown on the medicine label. You may also want to complete the table below for reference (or ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to complete it for you).

Name of medicine	
Number of tablets to dissolve in water	
Amount of water to dissolve the tablet(s) in	mL
Amount to give your child mL

 Different brands of phosphate, calcium and potassium are available. Each time you get a new prescription, check how to make the mixture and how much to give.

Items you will need

You will need the following items to prepare the mixture (your pharmacist should provide these):

- the effervescent tablets
- some water in a glass or cup
- a small mixing pot or glass
- two syringes: a larger oral syringe (usually 20 mL) for measuring water, and a smaller oral syringe to measure the dose if your child needs only a small amount of the mixture (the purple box explains what size to use)

How to prepare and give the mixture

- Use the larger syringe to draw up the required amount of water into the larger syringe. The grey box explains how to do this. This volume is usually between 10 and 20 mL, drawn into a 20 mL syringe.
- Gently squirt this water into your mixing pot or glass. If you spill any, start again.
- Add the tablet(s) to the water. It will fizz as it dissolves.
- Once the fizzing has stopped (this usually takes about 5 minutes), stir the mixture with the smaller syringe. The mixture will be cloudy.

- Draw up the amount of mixture your child needs into the appropriate-sized syringe. The purple box gives some guidelines.
- Gently squirt the liquid in the syringe into your child's mouth.
- Pour any leftover mixture into a paper towel and put it in the bin. Do not pour it down the sink or keep it for later.
- Rinse out the mixing pot and syringes (draw water into syringe and squirt it out two or three times).

What if I make a mistake?

If you make a mistake while preparing the mixture, throw the mixture away and start again.

What if I give the wrong amount?

You are unlikely to do harm if you give the wrong amount occasionally. Make a note of what you did when making and giving the mixture, then contact your doctor, nurse or pharmacist for advice.

How to draw up liquid into an oral syringe

- Put the tip of the syringe into the liquid.
- Hold the barrel of the syringe and pull up the plunger.
- Draw up more liquid than you need.
- Remove the syringe from the glass, and turn it upside down, so that the tip is upwards.
- Gently push in the plunger to squirt out any air bubbles (which should rise to the top) and liquid so that the top of the plunger is level with the right mark on the syringe.
- You may want to practise using the syringe by drawing up water and squirting it out again.
- Make sure you know how to read the scale on the side of the syringe.

You can read about how to use an oral syringe [here](#).

Which syringe should I use?

You need to use a syringe that is close to the amount of mixture you are to give your child so that the measurement is as accurate as possible. These are some guidelines:

- If the amount is less than 1 mL, use a 1 mL syringe.
- If the amount is more than 1 mL but no more than 5 mL, use a 5mL syringe.
- If the amount is more than 5 mL but no more than 10 mL, use a 10 mL syringe.
- If the amount is more than 10 mL, use a 20 mL syringe.

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