



*Giving medications by mouth is very important for treating your child's cancer. Your child must not miss medication doses, especially chemotherapy medication.*

*You need to know the name and reasons why your child is taking each one of his or her medications.*

*When providing your child with medications, be sure to read the pharmacy label on the medication and any instructions for the following information:*

- When to give
- How to give- by mouth or otherwise
- How often to give
- Where to store it
- Special rules- such as don't give with milk or citrus or do not crush
- When the medication will expire - especially for liquids

*If you have questions or concerns  
call the Division of Hematology/Oncology  
at (302) 651-5500.*

## Medications by Mouth for the Child with Cancer



1600 Rockland Road  
Wilmington, DE 19803 • 302-651-4000  
Nemours.org



- When giving medication to your child, be honest about the fact that you are giving medication. Do not hide it in food or call it candy.
- Give medications when you are calm and not in a hurry.
- Based on the age of your child, ask your child to help in giving the medication as much as possible.
- Give your child choices about how to take the medication whenever possible. Do you want your medication in applesauce or pudding? Would you like to drink it with water or with juice?
- Things can get mixed up when more than one caregiver is giving medications. It is a good idea to have a written log or some way to let everyone know what was given.
- Let your child know that not taking his/ her medications is not an option. It is required for them to get well.
- Try to avoid bargaining with toddlers and school age children. Setting a time limit is often helpful. This can be done with a timer.
- Reward your child for doing a good job. Offering a sticker or some other reward may be helpful.

## SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

- Some medications need to be taken when your child's stomach is empty. This means taking the medicine 1 hour before or 2 hours after a meal. Food in the stomach may either keep the medicine from working or it may take longer for the medication to work.
- Some medications can be crushed and some have a special coating so they cannot. Check with your pharmacist. Medications that can be crushed can be given with jam, pudding, ice cream or other soft foods.

- Some medications need to be taken with food. Eat a snack right before or after taking these medications.
- When mixing medication with soft foods or liquids mix the medication in a small amount. Use just enough to take away the taste of the medicine. You want to be sure the child will get the full dose.

## *Medications that can be crushed can be given with jam, pudding, ice cream or other soft foods.*

- If your child vomits (throws up) within 5 minutes of taking medicine and you can see that the medicine in the vomit, wait 15 minutes and give the medication again. If you are not sure, call the clinic for advice.
- Some pharmacies have flavorings to make medications taste better, such as chocolate, cherry, grape, or bubblegum. A small amount of flavoring is needed to make the medicine taste better.
- If your child has nausea or vomiting that keeps him or her from taking medications, try to give medicine for nausea and then give the other medications an hour later.
- When nothing else works and you are not able to get your child to take medications, call the clinic for help at 302 651-5500.

## Giving Medications To Teens

Parents need to have an active role in preparing and giving medications to teenagers. Kids in this age group want to return to normal life that does not include taking medications. Missing medication can effect your child's chances of being cured.

## LIQUID MEDICATIONS

- Do not use a kitchen spoon when measuring liquid medications. This can cause over dosing or under dosing. Use a measured teaspoon or tablespoon, a dropper or a syringe. This is available from your pharmacy or from the hospital or clinic.
  - 1 tsp or teaspoon = 5 ml
  - 1 tbsp or tablespoon = 15 ml
- Many liquid medications need to be shaken prior to use.
- If the medicine tastes bad, an ice cube or freeze pop a couple of minutes before giving the medication may numb the taste buds in your child's mouth making it easier to take.
- Most bitter taste buds are in the back of the tongue. If squirting medication in the mouth with a syringe try squirting to the sides of the mouth.

## PILLS AND CAPSULES

- If your child has trouble swallowing pills, you can try to teach your child (age 3 and older) to swallow using corn kernels or small candies such as Smarties or Tic Tacs.
- Taking pills or capsules with warm water may be helpful.
- Giving the child a choice of the type of liquid to drink the pill with is sometimes helpful.

## SAFETY MEASURES

- Keep all medications out of the reach of children.
- Always store medications in their original container.
- Always use child resistant caps.