

Ask the Pharmacist

Your pharmacist is the best (next to your doctor, of course) source of information on how to get the most from your medicines. If your child needs medication, here are some things to consider.

COLD AND COUGH MEDICINE FOR CHILDREN

Q: With so many cough and cold medicines available over-the-counter, what are some of the things to consider when choosing a cough medicine for my one-year-old?

A: In January 2008, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Public Health Advisory recommended that over-the-counter (OTC) cough and cold medicines should not be used to treat infants and children under 2 years of age because serious and potentially life-threatening side effects can occur from such use.

Some of the recommendations for parents and caregivers are:

- If the medicine does not contain dosing information for children, then it should not be used on them.
- Check the "active ingredients" and what symptoms each active ingredient is intended to treat. Cough and cold medicines often have more than one active ingredient (such as antihistamine, decongestant, cough suppressant, expectorant, or a pain reliever/fever reducer).
- Be very careful if you are giving more than one cough and cold medicine to a child. Many such medicines have similar active ingredients.
- Only use the measuring spoon or cup that comes with the medicine or those made specially for measuring drugs. Do not use common household spoons to measure medicines for children.
- Choose medicines with childproof safety caps when available; and store the medicines out of the reach of children.



CHILD REFUSES MEDICATION

Q: I have great difficulty getting my two-year-old to take her medicine. Do you have any advice to overcome this problem?

A: It is important for children to take the proper doses of medicine they have been prescribed. Here are some tips that may help:

- Request for medication in liquid form instead of tablets whenever possible.
- Try asking if the medicine is available in a flavour that your child likes.
- Check if the medicine can be mixed with something sweet, like honey or juice. If it is in tablet form, check if it can be mixed with other solid foods.
- Instead of using a spoon, you could use a syringe to squirt the medicine into your child's mouth. While squirting, do point it towards her cheek. Do not squirt straight down her throat as that might cause choking.
- You could offer rewards for taking her medicine.
- If your child still refuses to take her medicine, try again later in half an hour. **OH!**