Giving the Right Medicine to Your Child
• Give only medicines made for children
• Children are not ‘small’ adults
• Their bodies are less developed
• Adult medicines given to child could:
  o Affect child differently
  o Cause life-threatening side effects

Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Provider
• What is this medicine for?
• How much do I give and how often?
• What are the possible side effects?
• What are the signs of allergic reaction?
• How do I know if the medicine is working?
• When will I know if the medicine is working?
• When do I stop giving the medicine?
• Can I give with their other medicines, vitamins, supplements, or herbs?

General Tips for Safe Use of Medicines
• DO
  o Use only medicines made for children
  o Store medicine out of child’s reach in original bottle
  o Carefully read medicine label
  o Know child’s weight; doses are often weight-based
  o Know the names of all medicines your child takes
  o Give updated list of child’s medicines, vitamins, minerals, supplements, herbs, and alternative health treatments to healthcare provider at each visit
• DON’T
  o Stop medicines earlier than instructed
  o Give child other people’s medicines
  o Call medicines ‘candy’
  o Use longer or give higher dose unless told to by healthcare provider

Reading Labels is Important
• Labels tell details such as:
  o Name of medicine  o How often to take
  o How much to take  o How long to take
  o When to take  o How to store

Over-the-counter Medicines Not to Give Your Child Unless Advised by Healthcare Provider
• Aspirin, even baby aspirin
• Cough medicines
• Cold medicines for children under 4 to 6 years
• Medicines for diarrhea or constipation
• Medicines for nausea
• Medicines to make child fall asleep
• Ibuprofen for children under 6 months
• Expectorants (mucous-thinner)
• Oral or nose spray decongestants
• Steroid creams in the diaper area and on the face
• Herbal supplements
• Antibiotic creams on small cuts and scrapes
• Teething medicines

Safe Use of Liquid Acetaminophen
• Many different brands of acetaminophen
• Important to give right dose for child’s weight
• CONCENTRATIONS OF ACETAMINOPHEN NOW CHANGED
  o Old and new concentrations may still be in stores and homes including:
    • 160 mg/5 mL (less strong)
    • 80 mg/0.8 mL or 80 mg/1 mL (stronger)
  o Check Active Ingredient section on drug label to:
    o Learn strength
    o Right dose
    o Avoid multi-dosing
  o Use ONLY dosing device that comes with the medicine
  o If child is under 2 years, be sure to ask healthcare provider about right dose
  o If fever lasts longer than 72 hours or does not come down with right dose, call healthcare provider
  o Don’t give more than 5 doses in 24 hours

Side Effects
• Unwanted effects may occur with medicines
• Read information that comes with medicine package to learn of possible side effects
• Ask healthcare provider or pharmacist if you have any questions about possible side effects

This flipchart is supported by an educational grant from McNeil Consumer Healthcare.
SAFETY MATTERS  Pediatric Medication Safety

Vitamins and Minerals
- Ask healthcare provider before giving your child vitamins and minerals
- Food provides enough vitamins and minerals for most children
- Large amounts of vitamins and minerals can be dangerous
- If advised to give child vitamins or minerals:
  o Choose kind made for child’s age
  o Store out of child’s reach
  o Teach child they are not candy
  o Don’t use as replacement for healthy foods

Measuring Liquid Medicine
- Make sure you give the right dose by using:
  o Medicine syringe or dropper
  o Medicine spoon
  o Medicine cup
- Be sure you use correct measurement unit (teaspoon vs milliliters [mL])
- Make sure child finishes ALL medicine
- Do not use kitchen spoons because they don’t give accurate measurement
- Know the difference between a tablespoon (TBSP) and a teaspoon (TSP)
  o Tablespoon holds 3 times more medicine than teaspoon

Drug Allergies
- Drug allergy is bad reaction to a medicine
- Most allergic reactions cause mild symptoms
- However, some can be very serious
- Call healthcare provider or go to emergency room right away if you think child is allergic
- Have child carry card or wear medicine alert bracelet saying they have drug allergy

Safe Medicine Storage
- Store out of child’s reach and sight
- Store at recommended temperature
- Put medicines away after each use
- Hear the click to be sure child-proof cap is locked
- Teach medicine safety to children
- Keep all medicines up, away, and out of sight

Missed Doses
- Set up plan to help remember to give medicines
  o Give medicine when child does usual daily activity, like after brushing teeth
  o Set an alarm as a reminder of time to give next dose
- If you miss a dose
  o Give next dose as soon as remembered unless
    - Nearly time for next dose—skip the missed dose, do not double next dose
    - Several doses missed—ask healthcare provider

Tips for Children Taking Daily Medicines
- Never stop unless healthcare provider tells you to do so
- Always tell healthcare provider and pharmacist about daily medicines
- Always talk with healthcare provider or pharmacist before starting over-the-counter medicine
- Try to take at same time every day
- Be sure to refill before running out
- Have plan to make sure you have medicine in case of emergency or disaster

Notes

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