

About over-the-counter (OTC) Medicines

A prescription is not needed to buy over the counter (OTC) medicines. Some insurance may cover OTC medicines if your provider writes a prescription.

- **Know what symptoms you are trying to treat.** This will help you choose the right medicine. If your child only has a cough, do not give them cough medicine with extra ingredients for other symptoms that they do not have.
- **Know your child's allergy and medical information.** You do not want to give a medicine with an ingredient that your child is allergic to or that could make their illness worse. Be sure to check all of the active **and** inactive ingredients in the medicine.
- **Know if the medicine is safe for your child.**
 - Do not give a medicine only meant for adults to children or infants.
 - Stronger doses of infant medicines might not be safe for older children.
 - Do not give cough and cold medicines to children under 6 years old unless you have talked with your child's doctor first.
- **Know your child's weight.** You may need to know your child's current weight to know the right amount of medicine to give your child. Most often, there is a chart on the label to tell you how much medicine to give.
- **Ask a pharmacist for help.**
 - They can help you choose a medicine that is safe for your child.
 - They can also tell you the correct amount to give based on your child's weight and age.
- **Be aware of the dosage needed for each product.** Dosing can be very different among brands and formulas, even with the same ingredients. Read the medicine label every time. If a label peels off, throw the bottle away.
- **Be aware of all medicines your child is taking at the time.** You do not want to give your child two medicines with the same ingredient. This could cause bad side effects. Be aware that some medications have more than one ingredient.
- **Know what medicine helped your child before.** If it worked before, it may work again. Talk with the pharmacist first.
- It is okay to use the less expensive store brand if it has the ingredients you need.
- Keep all medicines in the original bottles. Store them in a safe place that your child can't reach by themselves.
- Talk with your provider or pharmacist about how to safely get rid of medicines that are old, or no longer needed.

Call 9-1-1 if your child is not breathing, has collapsed, or had a seizure.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.