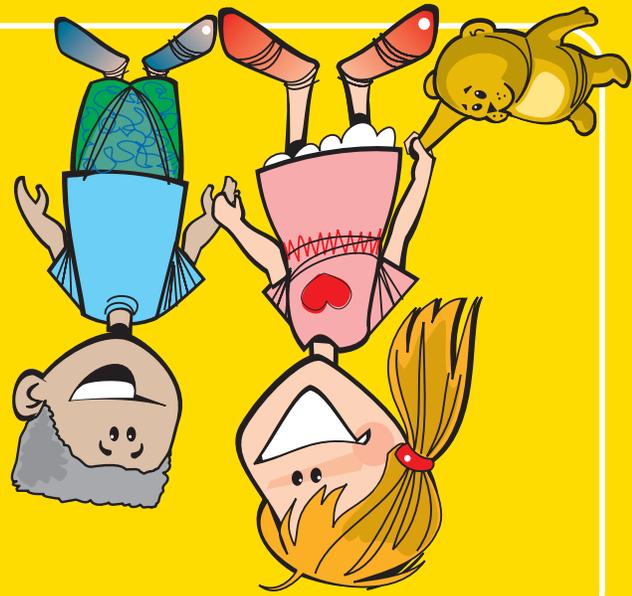


# KIDS AREN'T JUST SMALL ADULTS

Medicines, Children, and the Care  
Every Child Deserves

Developed by the  
U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
and the  
CHPA Educational Foundation



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services • Food and Drug Administration  
Call 1-888-INFO-FDA or visit [fda.gov/drugs](http://fda.gov/drugs).



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# KIDS AREN'T JUST SMALL ADULTS

**U**se care when giving any medicine to an infant or a child. Even over-the-counter (OTC) medicines that you buy are serious medicines. The following is advice for giving OTC medicine to your child, from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the makers of OTC medicines:

- 1. Always read and follow the *Drug Facts* label on your OTC medicine.** This is important for choosing and safely using **all** OTC medicines. Read the label every time, *before* you give the medicine. Be sure you clearly understand how much medicine to give and when the medicine can be taken again.
- 2. Know the “active ingredient” in your child’s medicine.** This is what makes the medicine work and is always listed at the top of the *Drug Facts* label. Sometimes an active ingredient can treat more than one medical condition. For that reason, the same active ingredient can be found in many different medicines that are used to treat different symptoms. For example, a medicine for a cold and a medicine for a headache could each contain the same active ingredient. So, if you’re treating a cold and a headache with two medicines and both have the same active ingredient, you could be giving two-times the normal dose. If you’re confused about your child’s medicines, check with a doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.
- 3. Give the right medicine, in the right amount, to your child.** Not all medicines are right for an infant or a child. Medicines with the same brand name can be sold in many different strengths, such as infant, children, and adult formulas. The amount and directions are also different for children of different ages or weights. Always use the right medicine and follow the directions exactly. Never use more medicine than directed, even if your child seems sicker than the last time.
- 4. Talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse to find out what mixes well and what doesn’t.** Medicines, vitamins, supplements, foods, and beverages don’t always mix well with each other. Your healthcare professional can help.
- 5. Use the measuring tool that comes with the medicine, such as a dropper, syringe or a dosing cup.** A different measuring tool, or a kitchen spoon, could hold the wrong amount of medicine.
- 6. Know the difference between a tablespoon (tbsp.) and a teaspoon (tsp.)** Do not confuse them! A tablespoon holds three times as much medicine as a teaspoon. On measuring tools, a teaspoon (tsp.) is equal to “5 cc” or “5 mL.”
- 7. Know your child’s weight.** Directions on some OTC medicines are based on weight. Never guess the amount of medicine to give to your child or try to figure it out from the adult dose instructions. If a dose is not listed for your child’s age or weight, call your doctor or other members of your healthcare team.
- 8. Prevent a poison emergency by always using a child-resistant cap.** Re-lock the cap after each use. More than 60,000 young children end up in emergency departments each year because they got into medicines while their parent or caregiver was not looking.
- 9. Store all medicines in a safe place.** Today’s medicines (including prescription and OTC medicines) are tasty, colorful, and many can be chewed. Kids may think that these products are candy. To prevent an overdose or poisoning emergency, store all medicines and vitamins in a safe place out of your child’s (and even your pet’s) sight and reach. If your child takes too much, call the Poison Help number at **1-800-222-1222** (open 24 hours every day, 7 days a week) or call 9-1-1.
- 10. Check the medicine three times.** First, check the outside packaging for such things as cuts, slices, or tears. Second, once you are at home, check the label on the inside package to be sure you have the right medicine. Make sure the lid and seal are not broken. Third, check the color, shape, size, and smell of the medicine. If you notice anything different or unusual, talk to a pharmacist or another healthcare professional.

