

Medicines can help you when you're sick or hurt. Medicines can even save your life. Prescription and over-the-counter medicines can be poisonous if you take too much or use them the wrong way.

Medicine Safety

You can help keep your family safe from medicines by following the safety tips below. Use the **Medicine Safety Checklist** (on the back) to make sure you give and take medicines safely!

1. Store Medicines Safely

- Keep medicines and vitamins in bottles with child-safety caps (child-resistant packaging). **Remember, child-safety caps are not child proof!** Make sure the safety caps are on tight at all times.
- Sort medicine and vitamins in locked cabinets out of the reach and sight of children.
- After you use a medicine, place the safety cap back onto the bottle tightly. Return the bottle to a locked cabinet.
- Flush outdated (expired) or leftover medicines down the toilet or take them to your local pharmacist.

2. Use Medicines Safely

- Understand and follow your doctor or pharmacist's directions for taking medicine. Always take the right dosage of medicine at the right time. If you have any questions, call your doctor or pharmacist.
- Before you take or give medicine, read the medicine's label. Check the label for your name, directions for using the medicine, and the expiration date.

- Taking medicine with some foods, alcohol, or other medicines can be dangerous. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking any medicine.
- Only take medicine that belongs to you. Do not share your medicine with anyone else.
- Do not take or give medicine in the dark, without your glasses on, or while you are sleepy.
- Never take medicine in front of your child or give medicine to one child while another is watching.

3. Know What to Do in a Poison Emergency

- Keep the Sanford Poison Center telephone number near your telephones.
- If you think someone has been poisoned, call the Sanford Poison Center immediately! Do not wait for the victim to look or feel sick!

Children and Medicine

- Before you give your child medicine, read the medicine label. If you have any questions, call your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take your time when giving your child medicine. When you give your child medicine too quickly, he/she may gag.
- When you give a liquid medicine to your child, use a measuring tool suited for your child's age. Do not use kitchen spoons or cooking utensils.
- Make sure you give your child the right dose of medicine. Base the dose on your child's weight. To get the right dose of medicine, carefully eye the dosage levels marked on the measuring tool.
- If your child throws up or spills some medicine, do not give your child extra

medicine. This could cause an overdose. Instead, call your doctor or pharmacist.

- Medicine can come in different strengths. Always check the label for the age recommendations and directions before giving it to your child. If you have any questions, call your doctor or pharmacist.
- Know the difference between dosing amounts. For example, a tablespoon (tbsp) is not the same as teaspoon (tsp).
- Never call medicine candy! Your child may eat the medicine, thinking it is candy.
- Never give your child someone else's medicine.

Iron Poisoning

Iron is a mineral needed for good health. Too much iron can be unsafe – even deadly! Keep vitamins and minerals with iron out of the reach and sight of children. Always keep them in containers with child-safety caps and stored in a locked cabinet.

Pregnant Women and Nursing Mothers

If you are pregnant, medicine can pass from you to your unborn baby. If you are nursing, medicine can also pass into breast milk. If you are pregnant or breast feeding talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or the Sanford Poison Center before taking any medications.

MEASURING TOOLS FOR CHILDREN

Infants: Use a nipple doser, nurser, or oral dropper.

Infants and Toddlers: Use an oral syringe.

Toddlers: Use a spill-proof, plastic dosing spoon or measuring spoon.

Children 3 and Up: Use a dosing cup