

Tips for Taking Medicine

Getting children to take medicines requires a lot of patience and sometimes a lot of imagination. It is important that medicine time does not become a “battle” with your child. Here are some ideas to help prevent battles:

Make the time as pleasant as possible

Explain how the medicine will help

Allow your child more choice in taking their medicines (such as sitting or standing, taking it with crackers or with milk, with dinner or after dinner).

Give your child time to take the medicine but don't let them stall too long

Be firm about taking the medicine but be kind. Don't force or yell at your child. “It is a rule you have to take your medicine. I understand you don't want to, but it is still the rule!”

After your child has taken the medicine, praise her/him. Children like to know they did a good job. “Thank you. You did very well taking your medicine all by yourself.”

As children grow, it is important for them to learn about their own medicines. They need to learn the names of their medicines, what they look like, how often to take them, why they are taking them, and side-effects. This is especially true for teenagers. However, getting teenagers to cooperate in taking medicines can sometimes be a problem. There can be many reasons for this but often they do not want to take medicine because it makes them feel different and reminds them of their disease. Allow them to talk about how they feel. Try to make taking their medicine associated with something positive (rewards or earning privileges). Sometimes keeping a calendar and using a check system can be helpful. Decide ahead of time the number of checks it will take to earn a reward.

Remember teenagers are just like everyone else – they will forget sometimes. If you run into problems you can ask your child's nurse or doctor for help.