



Consumers Can Help Prevent Harmful Medication Incidents

SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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Imported Acetaminophen for Children: Getting the Right Dose

Over the past few months, parents and caregivers in Canada have been dealing with a shortage of pain and fever medications for infants and children. To address this shortage, Health Canada is temporarily importing products from other countries.

At the time of writing, Health Canada had approved 2 imported acetaminophen products for children (Figure 1) that parents and caregivers can buy. These products contain the same strength of acetaminophen (160 mg in 5 mL) as Canadian products for children aged 2–11 years.

It's important to note that the strength of Canadian products for infants is different from that of products for children.

SafeMedicationUse.ca has the following tips for parents and caregivers to make sure your infant or child receives the right dose:

- **Speak with your pharmacist if you have an infant (under 2 years of age) and infant products are not available.** Canadian acetaminophen products for infants are a different strength (80 mg in 1 ml) than products for children (2-11 years of age). The pharmacist will help you select an available product and confirm the right amount of medication to give. Ask for a device to help you measure the dose.
- **Read the instructions** on the product to find the right amount of medication to give your child. Ask your pharmacist if you are unsure.
- **Buy only what you need** to avoid having too much medication in your home. Having excess medication at home is known to be a risk for accidental poisoning.



Figure 1. Pictures of imported acetaminophen products for children. Images courtesy of Johnson & Johnson Inc.

Get the Right Dose!

1. Find a product recommended for the age of your infant or child.
2. If a recommended product is unavailable, or if you are unsure, speak to your pharmacist to select an available product and confirm the right amount of medication to give.

Medication safety bulletins contribute to Global Patient Safety Alerts.

This newsletter was developed in collaboration with Best Medicines Coalition and Patients for Patient Safety Canada. Recommendations are shared with healthcare providers, through the ISMP Canada Safety Bulletin, so that changes can be made together. This newsletter shares information about safe medication practices, is noncommercial, and is therefore exempt from Canadian anti-spam legislation.