

## Help Prevent Medication Incidents

A component of the Canadian Medication Incident Reporting and Prevention System (CMIRPS).

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# Newsletter

July 27, 2011

## Preventing Errors with Children's Medicines Part 2 - At Home and Away from Home

This newsletter is the second in a series with suggestions to help prevent errors with children's medicines. Our first newsletter provided information on things to do and questions to ask when a medicine is prescribed and dispensed for your child ([Part 1 - At the Doctor's Office and Pharmacy](#)). This newsletter will provide information on steps you can take to reduce the chances of a mistake happening when your child is receiving medicine at home and away from home.

### At Home

- Be sure to carefully read any written information that is provided with your child's medicine. If you have any questions or concerns, get in touch with a healthcare provider.
- Always prepare doses of medicine in a clean, well-lit area. Carefully read the label on the medicine bottle each time you give the medicine, to make sure it is the medicine your child needs.
- Give the medicine at the correct time. Setting an alarm can be helpful. If your child requires several doses during the day, it may be helpful to track the doses on a calendar or chart.
- Do not stop giving a prescription medicine without first talking to your child's doctor or healthcare provider.
- Teach your child about taking medicine safely. Children who are old enough to understand should know what their medicine is called and why it is important to take the medicine. Ask your child to let you know if anything unusual happens after taking the medicine.
- Never give your child a medicine that is intended for another person.
- Make sure your child knows that the medicine is just for him or her and should never be shared with anyone else.
- Never tell a child that medicine tastes like candy or is candy.
- Store all medicines on a high shelf or in a cabinet that cannot be reached by children. Secure the cabinet with a child safety lock.
- If you think your child has accidentally received too much medicine, contact your doctor or your local poison information centre for advice. ([Poison Information Centres in Canada](#))

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### **Away from Home**

- If your child needs to take medicine while being cared for away from home, make sure the child's caregiver has and understands all the necessary information for giving the medicine. Provide the caregiver with written instructions, including when to give the medicine, the correct dose to give, and how to give it. The caregiver should know how to reach you if he or she has any questions. Also, make sure the caregiver has enough medicine to give the doses that will be needed.
- If your child has to take medicine during the school day, check the school's policy on giving medicine. Ask your pharmacist to help you provide a suitable supply of medicine to be kept at the school. Make sure the school has all the necessary information about your child's medicine.

**You can read about how to prevent accidental poisonings in children here:**

[SafeMedicationUse tips on Preventing Poisonings That Occur at Home](#)

Learning about your child's medicine, including how to give it and store it safely, are important ways to help prevent medication errors. If you ever have any questions or concerns about your child's medicine, always check with your healthcare provider, so that you have the information you need to use medicines safely.

**Coming soon in our next newsletter:**

Preventing Errors with Non-Prescription Medicines in Children

**ISMP Canada gratefully acknowledges the expert review of this newsletter and of Part 1 of the series by (in alphabetical order):**

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