



Ticket to Healthy Living

OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICINES



Texas Children's Health Plan is your family's ticket to health care.



What is an over-the-counter medicine?

Over-the-counter medicines are called OTCs. They are medicines you can buy in the store without an order (prescription) from your doctor. They can help your child feel better, but you need to be careful when using them. Make sure you pay attention to the dosage directions and when to give them.

Signs you might see

- There are many OTCs at the stores, but there are only a few you should use for your child.
- Tylenol (acetaminophen) - use this for fever or pain.
- Cough medicine - use this for a dry cough that keeps your child from sleeping.
- Dimetapp Elixir or PediaCare - use this for a stuffy or runny nose (cold).
- Calamine lotion - use this for bug bites and poison ivy. You also can use this on chicken pox sores to help stop them from itching.
- Desitin or zinc oxide ointment - use this for a diaper rash.
- Benadryl (alcohol-free) - use this for a runny nose, cough or itchy rash.

What to do

- Be sure to call your doctor before giving OTCs to your baby or child.
- Be sure to read all the labels and make sure you give the right size dose and at the right times. This is very important to understand.
- Always give the correct amount of medicine. Too much medicine can cause poisoning and even death. Read the label very well. If you are not sure how much medicine to give, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- To help you give the right amount of medicine, always give medicine with the spoon, medicine cup or dropper that comes with the medicine. Do not use a kitchen spoon to measure medicine. You can give too much or too little medicine.
- Do not mix up the words teaspoon and tablespoon. The symbol for a teaspoon is a small "t." The symbol for a tablespoon is a big "T." There are 3 teaspoons in 1 tablespoon.

t = teaspoon	= Tsp.	= 5 ml. or 5 cc
T = Tablespoon	= Tbsp.	= 15 ml. or 15 cc
- Only give your child OTCs when needed. For example, if your child has a fever, but is acting like normal (playing, eating, etc.) then no OTC medicine is needed. You don't want to over-medicate your child.
- Do not give your child aspirin. Aspirin can make your child very sick. Use Tylenol instead.
- Do not wake your child to give an OTC medicine, unless your doctor tells you.
- Do not give medicine by mouth to a child that is throwing up. Do not give it to a sleepy, crying or coughing child either. Your child can choke on the medicine.
- Keep all medicines in the bottle they come in. Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.
- Do not call medicine "candy."



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Children's
Health Plan is
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Texas Children's
Health Plan

A subsidiary of Texas Children's Hospital

1-800-990-8247

When to call your doctor

- You don't know if you should give your child an OTC medicine or you don't know what kind of medicine to give your child.
- You don't know how much medicine to give your child.
- You think your child may be having a reaction to a medicine. Some children are allergic to some medicines. You and your doctor won't know this until after your child has taken the medicine for the first time. Your child may have facial swelling, develop a body rash, have trouble breathing or vomit.
- You are worried or have questions.

