



How to give medicines: tablets

This leaflet gives tips about how to give tablets to children. Leaflets on individual medicines are available on the Medicines for Children website, www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk



This leaflet has been written specifically about the use of medicines in children. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again.



Medicines are often available as a tablet – that you can give to your child by mouth (orally). There are different types of tablets. Read more to find out how to give the type of tablet you have.

Tablets (general)

- Tablets should be swallowed with a glass of water, milk or juice. Your child should generally not chew the tablet unless they say “chewable”.



Some tablets should be taken with food or milk. Other tablets work best on an empty stomach. There are a few tablets that **should not** be taken with certain foods, juices or milk. This should be shown on the medicine label. If you are not sure which food or drink your child should have with the medicine, speak with your doctor or pharmacist. Detailed information about what to do is given in the leaflet for each medicine on the Medicines for Children website, www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk

Crushing tablets

Some tablets can be crushed and mixed with a small amount of food. If you are not sure if your child's tablets can be crushed, speak with your child's doctor or pharmacist. You may crush the tablet only if your child is unable to swallow it whole.

- Crush the tablet and mix it with a small amount of soft food such as yogurt, honey or jam.
- Make sure your child swallows it all straight away, without chewing.

Enteric-coated tablets

- **Do not** crush enteric-coated tablets. These have a coating to protect the stomach.
- This information will be shown on the medicine label.

Dissolving and dispersing tablets

Some tablets can be dissolved or dispersed in a glass of water. If you are not sure if your child's tablets can be dissolved, speak with your child's doctor or pharmacist.

- Dissolve or disperse the tablet in a small glass of water and then add some fruit juice or squash to hide the taste.



- Make sure your child drinks it straight away.
- Then add some more water or squash to the glass, swirl it round and ask your child to drink it. This makes sure they get all the medicine.

Dispersing tablets to give a part dose

Occasionally, you will need to give your child **part of a tablet**. Your doctor, pharmacist or nurse will tell you to disperse a tablet in a small amount of water and give part of the dispersed medicine.

For example, to give 30 mg of a medicine that is available in a 50 mg tablet, disperse the tablet in 5 mL of water and give 3 mL of the mixture using an oral syringe. You can get an oral syringe from your pharmacist.

- You will need to draw up 5 mL of water into an oral syringe (for young babies you will need to use water that has been freshly boiled and then cooled) and squirt this into a glass. Put the tip of the oral syringe in water and pull the plunger back so that the top of the ring is at 5 mL. The syringe will fill with water. Aim the syringe into a glass and push the plunger in slowly so that the water goes into the glass.
- Disperse the tablet (or part tablet) in the water (most tablets can be crushed first to speed the process up).
- Mix it vigorously – it may make a cloudy mixture.
- Draw up the right volume into an oral syringe. Your doctor, pharmacist or nurse will tell you how much of the mixture to give to your child.
- Pour any mixture left over down the sink. Do not keep it for another time.

A film on giving a part dose of a tablet is available on our website, www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk

Orodispersible tablets

Orodispersible tablets are designed to be dissolved on the tongue.

- Make sure your hands are dry.
- Take the tablet out of the blister pack and put it on your child's tongue straight away. The tablet will dissolve quickly.
- If you prefer, you can dissolve the orodispersible tablet in a glass of water. You can add juice or squash to hide the taste. Your child should drink it all straight away.
- Then add some more water, juice or squash to the glass, swirl it round and ask your child to drink it. This makes sure they get all the medicine.

Effervescent tablets

Effervescent tablets need to be dissolved in a glass of water.

- Dissolve the tablet in a glass of water. You can add juice or squash to hide the taste.
- Make sure your child drinks it either straight away or over a period of about 30 minutes.
- Then add some more water, juice or squash to the glass, swirl it round and ask your child to drink it. This makes sure they get all the medicine.

Chewtabs

'Chewtabs' can be chewed. This information will be shown on the medicine label.

- Make sure your child chews all of the medicine.
- Ideally your child should drink a glass of water, milk or juice after swallowing the chewtab.

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk



Version 1, December 2011. © NPPG, RCPCH and WellChild 2011, all rights reserved. Reviewed by: December 2013.

The primary source for the information in this leaflet is the British National Formulary for Children. For details on any other sources used for this leaflet, please contact us through our website, www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk

We take great care to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct and up-to-date. However, medicines can be used in different ways for different patients. It is important that you ask the advice of your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure about something. This leaflet is about the use of these medicines in the UK, and may not apply to other countries. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG), WellChild and the contributors and editors cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of information, omissions of information, or any actions that may be taken as a consequence of reading this leaflet.