

Ten Tips to Prevent an Accidental Overdose - FDA's Consumer Updates page - May 4, 2011

Always follow the directions on the Drug Facts label of your medicine. Read the label every time before you give the medicine.

Know the "active ingredient" in the medicine. This is what makes the medicine work and it is always listed at the top of the Drug Facts label. Many medicines used to treat different symptoms have the same active ingredient. So if you're treating a cold and a headache with two different medicines but both have the same active ingredient, you could be giving two times the normal dose. If you're confused, check with a doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

Talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse to find out what mixes well and what doesn't. Medicines, vitamins, supplements, foods, and beverages aren't always compatible.

Give the right medicine, in the right amount. Medicines with the same brand name can be sold in different strengths, such as infant, children, and adult formulas. The dose and directions also vary for children of different ages or weights. Always use the right strength and follow the directions exactly. Never use more medicine than directed unless your doctor tells you to do so.

Use the dosage delivery device that comes with the medicine. Many over-the-counter liquid medicines - such as pain relievers, cold medicine, cough syrups, and digestion aids - come with spoons, cups, oral droppers, or syringes designed to help consumers measure the proper dose. These "dosage delivery devices" usually have measurement markings on them - such as teaspoons (tsp), tablespoons (tbsp), or millilitres (ml). On May 4, 2011, FDA issued guidance to firms that manufacture, market, or distribute over-the-counter liquid medicines. The guidance calls for them to provide dosage delivery devices with markings that are easy to use and understand. And never drink liquid medicine from the bottle

Know the difference between a tablespoon (tbsp) and a teaspoon (tsp). A tablespoon holds three times as much medicine as a teaspoon. On measuring tools, a teaspoon (tsp) is equal to "5 ml."

Know your child's weight. Dosage amounts for some medicines are based on weight. Never guess how much to give your child or try to figure it out from the adult dose instructions. If a dose is not listed for your child's weight, call your healthcare professional.

Prevent a poison emergency by always using a child-resistant cap. Relock the cap after each use. Be especially careful with any medicines that contain iron; they are the leading cause of poisoning deaths in young children.

Store all medicines in a safe place. Some are tasty, colourful, and many can be chewed. Kids may think they're candy. Store all medicines and vitamins out of your child's (and your pet's) sight and reach. If your child takes too much, call the Poison Center Hotline at 800-222-1222 (open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or call 911.

Check the medicine three times before using. For any medicine, it is always good practice to first check the outside packaging for such things as cuts, slices, or tears. Second, once you're at home, check the label on the inside package to be sure you have the right medicine and that the lid and seal are not broken. Third, check the color, shape, size, and smell. If you notice anything unusual, talk to a pharmacist or other healthcare professional before using.

Find a word or phrase meaning the following:

1 a secure closure		16 giving advice on what to do	
2 the correct way to do sth		17 extra elements to the main thing	
3 the most common		18 smallest tool for delivering liquid	
4 keep while waiting to use		19 top of a bottle	
5 enjoyable to eat		20 emergency phone number	
6 opposite of "calculate accurately"		21 becoming ill through ingestion	
7 American for "sweets"		22 thick, sugary liquid	
8 long, thin cut		23 difficult for kids to open	
9 going well together		24 non-prescription	
10 solve a problem		25 quantity	
11 told how to		26 signs of illness	
12 small manmade object that does something useful		27 component with most effect	
13 stop in advance		28 very unclear about something	
14 the amount given		29 piece of advice	
15 drinks		30 the processing of food in the stomach	