

Medicine Safety Guide for Parents & Caregivers



**New York City
Poison Control Center**

(English)

Medicine Safety Guide

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Medicine Safety and Children



The New York City Poison Control Center can help you learn about your child's medicines and how to give them safely.

Children are different than adults. It is important for you to know about your child's medicine because:

- The way his or her body reacts to medicines may be different from an adult.
- You may need to give your child more than one medicine. You need to know if they are safe to take together.

The New York City Poison Control Center

Who can you call if you have questions about your child's medicine?

Call the New York City Poison Control Center if you have questions about any medicine.

What are some reasons to call the Poison Control Center about medicine?

- If your child is given too much of a medicine
- If your child takes the wrong medicine
- Questions about possible medicine interactions
- Questions about side effects
- Questions about medicine dosing

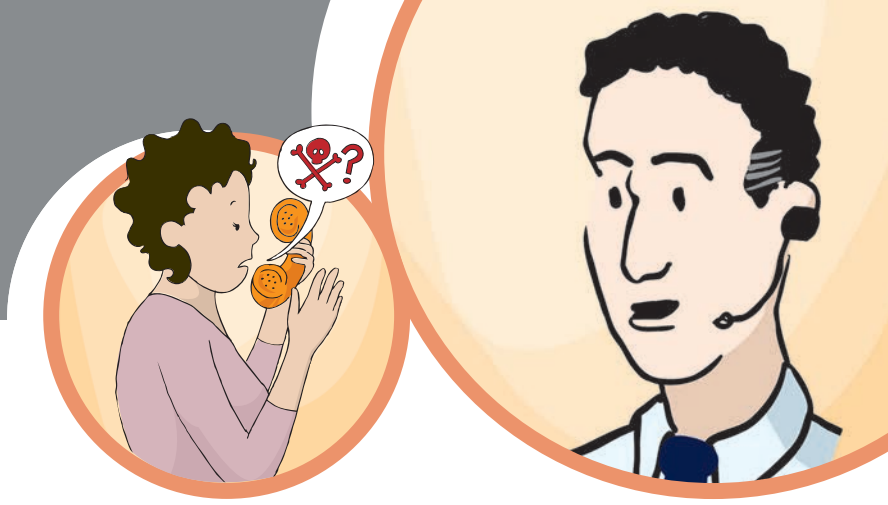
How can you contact the Poison Control Center?

Call 1-800-222-1222

Can you call the Poison Control Center for any other reason?

Yes. You can call with questions about possible poisons inside and outside your home such as:

- Cleaning products
- Plants
- Chemicals
- Personal care products
- Bites and stings



When can you call the Poison Control Center?

Call at any time – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Do you have to pay for calling the Poison Control Center?

No. All calls are free and confidential.

Can you get help at the Poison Control Center if you don't speak English?

Yes. The Poison Control Center has access to translation services for over 150 languages.

Who will answer your calls at the Poison Control Center?

Registered pharmacists and nurses who are certified in poison information answer your questions about medicine safety and provide treatment advice.

Medicine Facts

What kinds of medicines are there?

- There are 2 kinds of medicines: prescription and nonprescription.
- Herbals, vitamins and minerals are also nonprescription medicines.

What do you need to know about medicine names?

Some medicines have 2 names: a brand name and a generic name.

- A brand name is given by the company that makes it. An example is Tylenol[®].
- A generic name is the chemical name for the medicine. An example is acetaminophen.

What do medicines do?

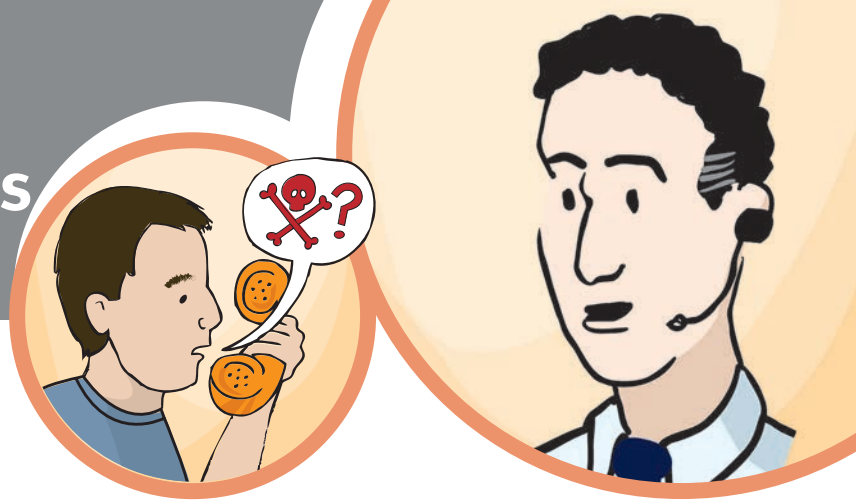
There are 3 common uses for medicines:

- Help with symptoms
- Prevent an illness
- Cure an illness

What things affect how medicines work?

- How much medicine is given
- How often medicine is given
- How many days it is given
- If it is given with other medicines
- If it is given with or without food

Prescription Medicines



What is a prescription medicine?

In the U.S., these are medicines prescribed by certain licensed health care providers:

- Doctors
- Nurse Practitioners
- Physician Assistants
- Dentists

What is a medicine information sheet?

This is the printed information that is included with the prescription medicine.

Can I get the prescription label in my language?

- Ask your pharmacist if they can print the label and medicine information sheet in your language.

What information is on the prescription medicine label?

- Your child's name and address
- Your child's doctor's name
- The date the prescription was filled
- Your child's prescription number
- The name and strength of the medicine
- Instructions for dosing the medicine
- The form of the medicine (syrup, tablet, cream)
- The expiration date
- The name, address, and phone number of the pharmacy
- How many times the prescription can be refilled

Prescription Medicine

A common prescription medicine for young children is an antibiotic, such as amoxicillin.

What are antibiotics?

- Antibiotics are medicines that kill bacteria that cause illness.

Why is it important to take antibiotics for the full length of time?

- If you do not take the antibiotic for the full length of time, the bacteria that caused the illness may not be killed.
- The bacteria may become resistant to the antibiotic. Then, in the future, the antibiotic may not work.

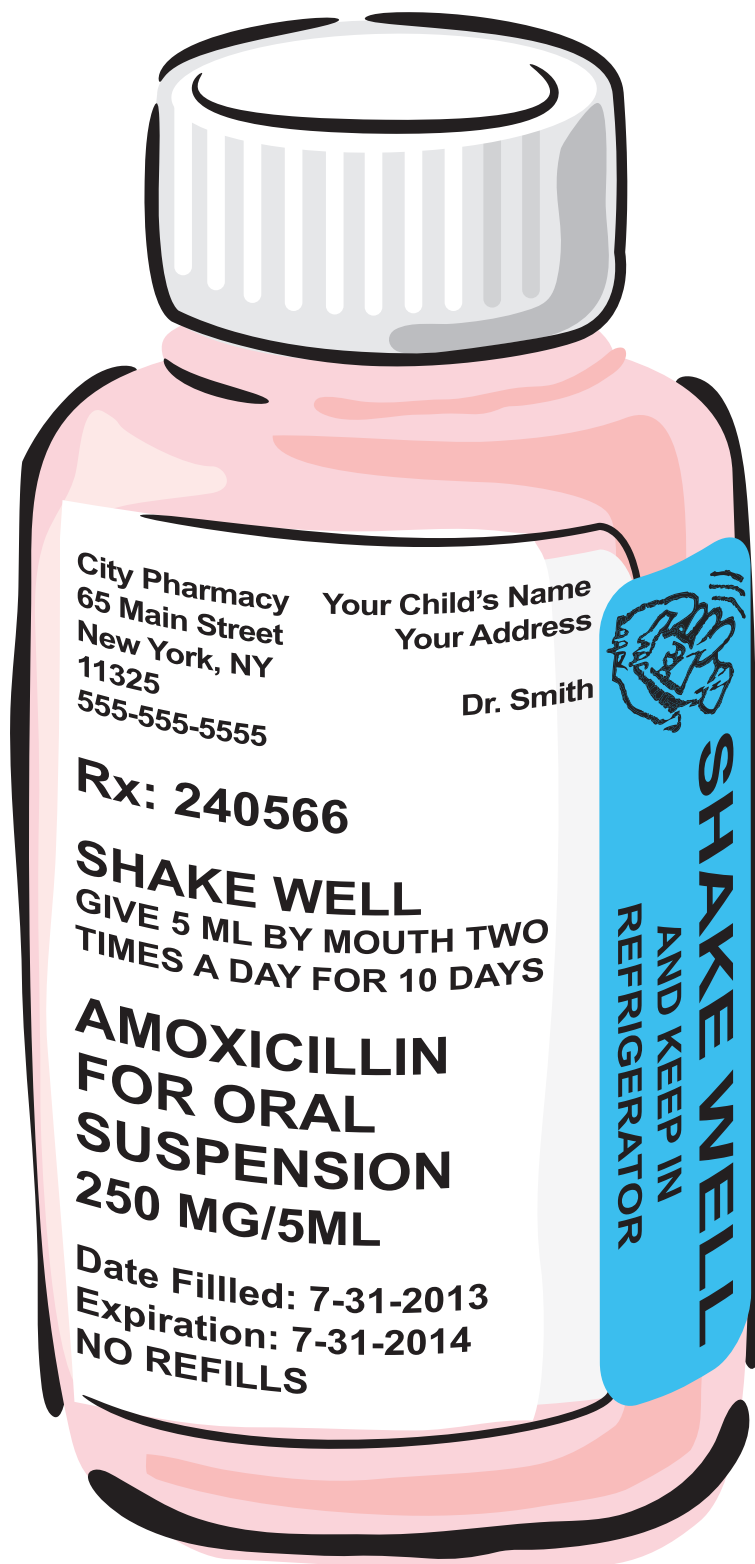
Prescription Label Activity

A sample prescription medicine label is shown on page 7. Use it to answer the following questions.*

1. What is the name of the medicine? _____
2. How much medicine should you give? _____
3. How many times a day should you give the medicine? _____
4. Where should this medicine be stored? _____
5. What should be done before giving the medicine? _____

*Answers are on page 28.

A Sample Prescription Medicine Label for Children's Liquid Antibiotic Medicine



Nonprescription Medicines

What are nonprescription medicines?

These are medicines you can buy without a prescription in supermarkets and pharmacies.

How do I choose a nonprescription medicine for my child?

- Read the label on the medicine, ask your pharmacist or doctor about how much is safe to give.
- Don't give adult medicine to a child.

What are some common nonprescription medicines for young children?

- Pain relievers and fever reducers

Acetaminophen (Tylenol[®]) and ibuprofen (Motrin[®]) are common medicines used to treat pain and reduce a child's fever. Acetaminophen and ibuprofen are the generic names. They come in many different medicines. To safely give these medicines:

- Always read and follow the directions closely.
- Determine the dose based on a child's weight.
- Do not give more than the recommended dose.
- Talk to your doctor before giving.
- Use the dropper, syringe, or cup that comes with the medicine.
- Do not give two medicines that contain the same active ingredient.

Nonprescription Medicines

What are some medicines I should not give my child?

- Aspirin should not be given to a child. It could cause a serious health problem called Reye's Syndrome.
- Benadryl is a medicine used to treat allergies. Its generic medicine name is diphenhydramine. Check with your doctor before you give it to a child for an allergy. It can make a child sleepy or excited. Do not give this medicine to help a child sleep.
- Cough and cold medicine. Most cough and cold medicine labels say the medicine should not be given to a child under 4. A sample of this type of cough and cold medicine label is on page 21.

What information is on the nonprescription medicine label?

- Active ingredients to treat the problem.
- Reasons to use the medicine
- Warnings about possible problems
- Directions for taking the medicine

Nonprescription Medicine Label Activity

Nonprescription Medicine Label Activity

Look at the sample nonprescription medicine label on page 11 and complete the following information questions*:

1. What is the active ingredient in this medicine? _____
2. Why would you give this medicine (what are the uses)?

3. How much medicine should you give to a child that weighs 30 pounds? _____
4. How often should you give this medicine? _____

***Answers are on page 28.**

A Sample Nonprescription Medicine Label for Children's Liquid Medicine

Drug Facts

Active Ingredient (in each 5mL).....**Purpose**
 Acetaminophen 160 mg..... Fever reducer/pain reliever

Uses temporarily: ■ reduces fever
 ■ relieves minor aches and pains due to: ■ the common cold ■ flu ■ headache ■ sore throat ■ toothache

Warnings

Liver warning: This product contains acetaminophen. Severe liver damage may occur if your child takes
 ■ more than 5 doses in 24 hours, which is the maximum daily amount
 ■ with other drugs containing acetaminophen

Sore throat warning: If sore throat is severe, persists for more than 2 days, is accompanied or followed by fever, headache, rash, nausea, or vomiting, consult a doctor promptly.

Do not use ■ with any other drug containing acetaminophen (prescription or nonprescription). If you are not sure whether a drug contains acetaminophen, ask a doctor or pharmacist.
 ■ if your child has ever had an allergic reaction to this product or any of its ingredients

Ask a doctor before use if your child has liver disease

Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if your child is taking the blood thinning drug warfarin

Stop use and ask a doctor if

■ pain gets worse or lasts more than 5 days ■ new symptoms occur
 ■ fever gets worse or lasts for more than 3 days ■ redness or swelling is present
 These could be signs of a serious condition.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away. (1-800-222-1222) Quick medical attention is critical even if you do not notice any signs or symptoms.

Directions ■ this product does not contain directions or complete warnings for adult use

■ do not give more than directed (see Liver warning) ■ find right dose on chart. If possible, use weight to dose; otherwise use age ■ shake well before using ■ use only enclosed syringe designed for use with this product. Do not use any other dosing device ■ remove bottle cap and insert syringe tip through opening at top of the bottle ■ tip the bottle upside down and draw medicine into the syringe ■ fill to dose level ■ dispense liquid slowly into child's mouth, toward inner cheek ■ if needed, repeat dose every 4 hours while symptoms last ■ do not give more than 5 times in 24 hours
 ■ do not give for more than 5 days unless directed by a doctor ■ replace cap tightly to maintain child resistance

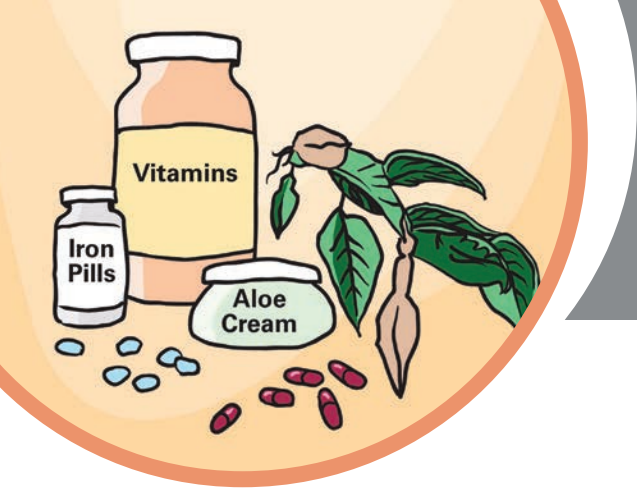
Dosing Chart

Weight (lb)	Age (yr)	Dose (mL)
under 24	under 2 years	ask a doctor
24-35	2-3 years	5mL

Attention: use only enclosed syringe specifically designed for use with this product. Do not use any other dosing device.

Other information ■ store at 20° - 25°C (68° - 77°F) ■ do not use if printed bottle wrap is broken or missing

Inactive ingredients anhydrous citric acid, butylparaven, calcium sulfate, carrageenan, D&C red no. 33, FD&C blue no. 1, flavor, glycerin, high fructose corn syrup, hydroxyethyl cellulose, microcrystalline cellulose and carboxymethylcellulose sodium, propylene glycol, purified water, sodium benzoate, sorbitol solution, tribasic sodium phosphate



Herbals, Vitamins and Minerals

What are herbals?

Herbal products have active ingredients taken from plants. An example is ginseng.

What are vitamins and minerals?

Vitamins and minerals are found in most foods. People may take vitamins and minerals to add to their diet. Examples are Vitamin C and Calcium.

How can herbals, vitamins or minerals affect my child's medicine?

They may affect the way medicine works in your child's body.

Should you discuss these products with your child's pediatrician and pharmacist?

Yes, it is important to tell the doctor and pharmacist if your child is taking these products. Tell them:

- What you give
- How much you give
- When you give it
- Why you give it

Reactions to Medicines

A big part of medicine safety is knowing how your child's medicines can affect him or her. Three categories of reactions your child could have are: side effects, allergies and interactions.

What are side effects?

- Side effects are common reactions your child may have when taking certain medicines.
- Side effects can include headache, sleepiness and upset stomach.
- Almost all medicines can cause side effects.
- Some side effects are mild and others can be more serious.

What are drug allergies?

- Drug allergies are unusual reactions to a medicine.
- Reactions can include hives or trouble breathing but are different for each person.
- Call the doctor right away if your child is having an allergic reaction to the medicine.

What are drug interactions?

- Drug interactions are when two or more medicines (prescription, nonprescription or herbal product) combine in the body. The combination may change the way the medicine works.



New Medicine

What should I do before my child begins a new medicine?

- Talk to your child's doctor about any:
 - medicines, herbals, vitamins and minerals your child takes
 - drug allergies your child has
 - food allergies or special diet
- Ask your child's doctor or pharmacist questions about all new medicines:
 - the name of your child's medicine
 - the purpose of your child's medicine (symptom relief, prevention or cure)
 - how to give your child the medicine
 - possible side effects
- If you do not have an oral syringe or dropper for dosing liquid medicine, ask the pharmacist for one when picking up the medicine.

Children's Medicine Checklist

What should I do when giving my child medicines?

- Know what active ingredient is in your child's medicine.**
Be sure to ask your pharmacist or the Poison Control Center if you are unsure of the active ingredient in prescription and nonprescription medicines.
 - Do not give more than one medicine with the same active ingredient.

- Know your child's weight. Use your child's weight to find the right dose of nonprescription medicine to give. This can be found on the nonprescription medicine label.**
 - If your child's weight is not listed on the label, ask your doctor or pharmacist what dose to give. Do not guess the dose.

- Use the dropper, syringe or cup that comes with the medicine and give the exact amount.**
 - Do not use a kitchen spoon to measure the medicine.

- Keep track of your child's medicine schedule.**
 - Use a medicine log or medicine list. Indicate on the log each time the medicine is given by a caregiver.

- Save the number for the Poison Control Center in your cell phone 1-800-222-1222.**
 - Call anytime with questions about medicines.

Medicine Safety

What do I do when my child's medicine expires?

- Do not save old medicines. They lose their strength over time.
- Call the Poison Control Center to find out the best way to safely dispose of your child's medicines.

When should I get help with my child's medicines?

- Call your child's doctor right away if your child has a rash, a fever, hives, or another problem.
- Call 911 right away if your child is having trouble breathing, convulsions or any signs of a serious problem.

- Use one pharmacy for all your child's medicines. This will help your pharmacist identify any possible drug interactions.
- Call your child's doctor or pharmacist if your child misses a dose of their medicine.
- Call the Poison Control Center with questions about your child's medicine including dosing, interactions and side effects.

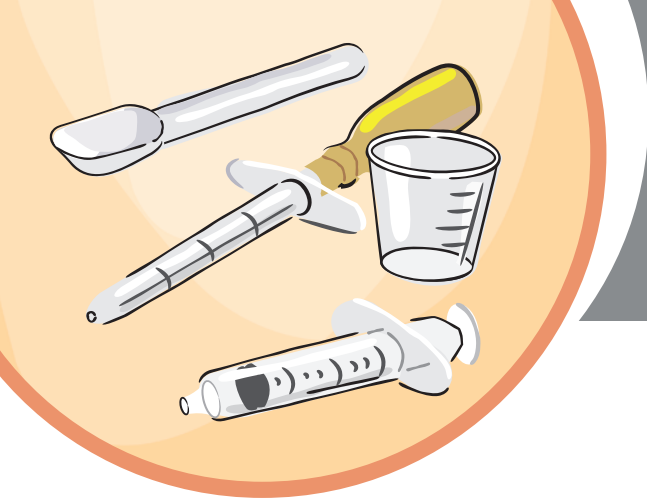
Learning About Your Child's Medicine

What can you do to learn more about your child's medicines?

- Ask your child's doctor or nurse
- Ask your child's pharmacist
- Read the medicine label
- Read the medicine information sheet
- Call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222

What do you need to know about your child's medicine?

- The name of your child's medicine
- The purpose of your child's medicine
- Directions for giving your child medicine
- When to stop giving the medicine



Safely Dosing Your Child's Liquid Medicine

Is it safe to use a kitchen spoon when dosing medicine for a child?

- No, children's medicine doses must be measured exactly. The kitchen teaspoon or tablespoon is not an exact amount.

What should I use to dose liquid medicine for my child?

- Always use an oral syringe, medicine dropper or cup that comes with the medicine.

What are common dosing abbreviations to know when giving medicine to children:

- Common dosing abbreviations you may see when giving liquid medicine:

ml = milliliters

tsp = teaspoon

tbsp = tablespoon

1 tsp = 5 ml

3 tsp = 1 tbsp (15 ml)

Medicine Safety Tips



Talk to your pharmacist, doctor or nurse

Tell them the medicines, herbals, and vitamins your child takes. Tell them about any allergy your child has to food or medicine.

Learn about your child's medicine

Find out its name (brand and generic), its purpose, possible side effects, and directions.

Monitor your child's reactions

Call your doctor right away if your child has a rash, a fever, or another problem.

- Call 911 right away if your child is having trouble breathing, convulsions or another serious problem

Keep track of your child's medicines

Use a medicine list (an example is on page 23), to track your child's medicines and why you are giving them.

Use a medication communication log (an example is on page 25) to keep track each time medicine is given during the day and night.

Don't give expired medicines

Check the expiration date. If expired, call the Poison Control Center to find out how to get rid of your child's medicine safely.

Call the Poison Control Center for more information

Call **1-800-222-1222** any time to ask questions about your child's medicines.

Medicine Safety Activity

Medicine Safety Activity

Using the children's cough and cold medicine label on page 21 please answer the following:

1. How much medicine should you give a 5-year-old that weighs 50 pounds?

2. Is acetaminophen one of the active ingredients in this medicine?
Yes No
3. Can you give this medicine with Tylenol? _____
4. What is the maximum number of times you can give this medicine to a child in 24 hours? 3 5 7
5. If think you gave too much medicine, where can you call to get help?

***Answers are on page 28.**

A Sample Children's Cough and Cold Medicine Label

Drug Facts		
Active Ingredient (in each 5 mL, 1 teaspoon)		
Acetaminophen	160 mg Pain reliever/fever reducer	
Chlorpheniramine maleate	1 mg Cough suppressant	
Dextromethorphan HBr	5 mg Cough suppressant	
Purpose		
Uses temporarily relieves the following cold/flu symptoms: ■ cough ■ headache ■ sore throat ■ sneezing and runny nose ■ temporarily reduce fever		
Warnings		
Liver warning: This product contains acetaminophen. Severe liver damage may occur if your child takes: ■ more than 5 doses in 24 hours, which is the maximum daily amount ■ with other drugs containing acetaminophen		
Sore throat warning: If sore throat is severe, persists for more than 2 days, is accompanied or followed by fever, headache, rash, nausea, or vomiting, consult a doctor promptly.		
Do not use ■ to make a child sleepy ■ in a child who is taking a prescription monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) (certain drugs for depression, psychiatric or emotional conditions, or Parkinson's disease), or for 2 weeks after stopping the MAOI drug. If you do not know if your child's prescription drug contains an MAOI, ask a doctor or pharmacist before giving this product ■ with any other drug containing acetaminophen (prescription or non-prescription). If you are not sure whether a drug contains acetaminophen, ask a doctor or pharmacist.		
Ask a doctor before use if the child has ■ glaucoma ■ persistent or chronic cough such as occurs with asthma ■ cough that occurs with too much phlegm (mucus) ■ a breathing problem such as chronic bronchitis ■ liver disease		
Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if the child is taking ■ sedatives or tranquilizers ■ the blood thinning drug warfarin		
When using this product ■ do not exceed recommended dosage (see overdose warning) ■ may cause excitability, especially in children ■ marked drowsiness may occur ■ sedatives and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness		
Stop use and ask a doctor if ■ new symptoms occur ■ fever gets worse or lasts for more than 3 days ■ redness or swelling is present ■ pain or cough gets worse or lasts for more than 5 days ■ cough comes back or occurs with rash or headache that lasts. These could be signs of a serious condition.		
Keep this and all drugs out of the reach of children.		
Overdose Warning: Taking more than the recommended dose (overdose) could cause serious health problems, including liver damage. In case of accidental overdose, seek professional assistance or contact a Poison Control Center immediately. Quick medical attention is critical even if you do not notice any signs or symptoms.		
Directions ■ do not exceed recommended dosage (see overdose warning) ■ do not use in infants ■ shake well before using ■ find right dose on chart below. If possible, use weight to dose; otherwise, use age ■ if needed, repeat dose every 4 hours while symptoms last ■ do not give more than 5 times in 24 hours		
Weight (lb)	Age (yr)	Dose (tsp or mL)
under 36	under 4	do not use
36-47	4-5	do not use unless directed by a doctor
48-95	6-11	2 tsps or 10 mL
Other information ■ store at controlled room temperature ■ dosage cup provided		
Inactive ingredients acesulfame potassium, carboxymethylcellulose sodium, cellulose, citric acid, flavors, glycerin, high fructose corn syrup, purified water, red 33, red 40, sodium benzoate, sorbitol, xanthan gum		

Medicine Safety Tools

- **Medicine List**
- **Medicine Communication Log**
- **Emergency Information Sheet**

Medicine List

Fill in this form to help you keep track of all the medicines your child is taking. Bring it to doctors' appointments, pharmacy visits or to the hospital. Be sure to include all prescription medicines, nonprescription medicines, herbals, vitamins and minerals your child is taking. Keep this list up to date.



Name _____
 Date of Birth _____ Telephone _____

Name of Medicine, Vitamin, Herbal, or Mineral	What it is for	When to take it	How much to take	Take with or without food	Possible side effects	Prescribed by

Allergies _____
 Doctors' Name _____ Telephone _____
 Emergency Contact _____ Relationship _____

Pharmacy _____
 Telephone _____ Telephone (home) _____
 Telephone (cell) _____

For questions about your medicine, please call NYC Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222

Medicine List



Fill in this form to help you keep track of all the medicines your child is taking. Bring it to doctors' appointments, pharmacy visits or to the hospital. Be sure to include all prescription medicines, nonprescription medicines, herbals, vitamins and minerals your child is taking. Keep this list up to date.

Name _____

Date of Birth _____ Telephone _____

Name of Medicine, Vitamin, Herbal, or Mineral		What it is for	When to take it	How much to take	Take with or without food	Possible side effects	Prescribed by
Brand Name	Generic Name						

Allergies _____

Emergency Contact _____

Doctors' Name _____ Telephone _____

Name _____ Relationship _____

Pharmacy _____ Telephone _____

Telephone (home) _____ Telephone (cell) _____

For questions about your medicine, please call NYC Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222

Medicine Communication Log



Use this form to keep track of when you give your child medicines. Each day, list all your child’s medicines and check the box showing when you or another caregiver gave a dose. Post this log in a place where all caregivers will clearly see it.

Name _____

Day	Date	Name of Medicine	Morning	Noon	Evening	Bed

For questions about your medicine call
New York City Poison Control Center 1-800-222-1222

Medicine Communication Log



Use this form to keep track of when you give your child medicines. Each day, list all your child's medicines and check the box showing when you or another caregiver gave a dose. Post this log in a place where all caregivers will clearly see it.

Name _____

Day	Date	Name of Medicine	Morning	Noon	Evening	Bed

**For questions about your medicine call
New York City Poison Control Center 1-800-222-1222**

Emergency Information Sheet



Your Child's Information

Complete this form. Keep it in a place it can easily be found in case of a medicine emergency.

Your Child's Name _____

Date of Birth _____ Weight _____

Today's Date _____

Emergency Contact Information

Name _____

Telephone Number (work) _____

Telephone Number (cell) _____

Relationship _____

Pediatrician

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Pharmacy Telephone Number _____

Allergies _____

Using your Smartphone download a free QR Reader application to receive more information.

Save to your contacts.



The New York City Poison Control Center is here to help you with medicine safety. Call us anytime at **1-800-222-1222**

Answers for Activities

Prescription Label Activity (page 6)

1. What is the name of the medicine? **Amoxicillin**
2. How much medicine should you give? **5 mL**
3. How many times a day should you give the medicine? **Two (2)**
4. Where should this medicine be stored? **In a refrigerator**
5. What should be done before giving the medicine? **Shake well**

Nonprescription Medicine Label Activity (page 10)

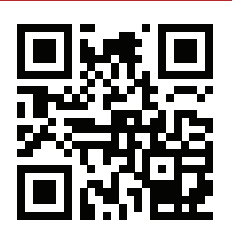
1. What is the active ingredient in this medicine?
Acetaminophen 160mg
2. Why would you give this medicine (what are the uses)?
Reduce fever, relieves aches and pains due to: cold, flu, headache, sore throat, toothache
3. How much medicine should you give to a child that weighs 30 pounds?
5mL
4. How often should you give this medicine? **Every 4 hours if needed, but not more than 5 doses in 24 hours**

Your Medicine Safety Activity (page 20)

1. How much should I give a 5-year-old child that weighs 50 pounds?
2 tsps or 10mL
2. Is acetaminophen one of the active ingredients in this medicine?
Yes
3. Can you give this medicine with Tylenol? **No**
4. What is the maximum number of times you can give this medicine to a child in 24 hours? **5**
5. If think you gave too much medicine, where can you call to get help?
The New York City Poison Control Center: 1-800-222-1222, your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.



Using your Smartphone download
a free QR Reader application to
receive more information.



Save to your contacts.

The New York City Poison Control Center is
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