Liquid Medication Administration

Some children and adults have a hard time swallowing pills. Some medicines may need to be given in liquid form. Sometimes this is the only way the medicine is made.

LIQUID MEASUREMENTS

It is very important the liquid medicine is measured correctly:

- Liquid medicine is often measured in teaspoons. A spoon from your silverware drawer should not be used because it may not be an actual measurement of a teaspoon.
- Medication instructions may use different measurements than what you are used to. You might need to change them to something more familiar. For instance:
  - 1 mL (milliliter) is the same as 1 cc (cubic centimeter).
  - 5 mL (or 5 cc) is the same as 1 teaspoon. The short way of writing "teaspoon" is "tsp."
  - 15 mL (or 15 cc) is the same as 1 tablespoon. The short way of writing "tablespoon" is "T" or sometimes "Tbsp."
  - 1 tablespoon is the same as 3 teaspoons.
- To get the correct measurement, try using:
  - A syringe that has measurements marked on the side.
  - A cylindrical dosing spoon. This is a special spoon that you can buy at a drug store. It looks like a test tube with a spoon on one end. Measurement marks are on the side of the spoon.
  - A measuring spoon made for cooking.
  - A glass or plastic measuring cup with markings.

LIQUID MEDICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Read all instructions before taking liquid medication. They will be on the bottle, on the box or on a paper inside the package. Follow them carefully.
- Be sure you know:
  - Whether you need to shake the medicine before taking it. If so, shake it well.
  - Whether the medicine should be taken on an empty stomach.
  - Whether the medicine should be taken with food.
  - What side effects to watch for.
- Put the exact amount into a spoon, cup or syringe.
- Make sure all the medicine is taken.

LIQUID MEDICATION TIPS

- Some liquid medicines taste bad. There are ways to make them easier to swallow:
  - Chill the medicine. Be sure to ask a caregiver or the pharmacist if that is okay.
  - Ask the pharmacist to add flavor to the medicine.
  - Mix the medicine with soft food or liquid if allowed.
  - Use a syringe to give the medicine. Put it into the side of the mouth, away from the taste buds. You will taste less of the medicine this way.
- Never tell a child that medicine is candy.
- Keep all medicine in a safe, child-proof spot. An overdose can occur if a child takes medicine without adult supervision.
- Store medicine in a cool place. Keep it away from sunlight.
- It is important when taking liquid medication that you or your child are sitting up or standing. Never take medication while lying down. It is possible to choke if you take medication lying down.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- The medicine cannot be taken for any reason.
- You cough often after drinking liquids.
- Vomiting or diarrhea develops.
- A side effect develops. Check the medicine package or insert for medication side effects.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Signs of an allergic reaction occur. This may include:
  - A rash.
  - Itchy skin.
  - Swelling of the tongue, lips or face.
  - Wheezing or trouble breathing.
  - Feeling dizzy or light-headed.
- A fever of more than 102° F (38.9° C) develops.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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