



Liquid HIV Medicines

Measuring Liquid Medicines

Liquid medicines need to be accurately measured with a syringe or medication cup. Teaspoons and tablespoons normally used at home may not be accurate enough. The nurse on your child's care team, or your pharmacist, can help you obtain a supply of syringes or medication cups. You can wash and reuse these.

The nurse or pharmacist will review all new medicines with you. They will also show you how to measure medications using a dropper, syringe or medication cup.

Droppers

Sometimes medicines come with a dropper. To use the dropper, place it in the bottle and squeeze the rubber top. Lift the dropper from the bottle and read the amount of medication inside off the side of the dropper. To get to the correct dosage, gently squeeze the top of the dropper until the medication is in line with the correct dose marked on the dropper.

Do not switch droppers from one medication to another. Often, the dosing measurements on a dropper can only be used for a specific medication. Do not use a dropper with a medicine unless that dropper comes in the package with that medicine.

Syringes

For children less than 1 year of age, we prefer that liquid medicines be measured with a syringe rather than with a cup.

To use a syringe, put the tip of the syringe into the medication bottle and pull the plunger back to draw medication into the syringe. Remove any large air bubbles by holding the syringe with the tip upward, tapping it and pressing the plunger to squeeze out the air. Put the tip of the syringe back into the bottle and press the plunger until the tip lines up with the correct dose or number on the syringe.

Be careful when obtaining a new supply of syringes since each type measures differently.

Medication Cups

You can use medication cups to give medicines to children older than 1 year of age.

To measure a dose of liquid medication accurately with a medication cup, place the cup on a flat surface and keep your eye level with the cup. Pour slowly to the desired dose.

Helping Your Child Take Medications

Liquid medications often have a bad, sometimes bitter taste. Most pharmacies now offer a choice of added flavoring, but this still may not cover the bad taste. Every child is different, so you may need to try several methods to find the one that works best for your child. We recommend the following methods:

General Instructions for Babies and Toddlers

This method works well with children small enough to be held.

- Hold your child in your arms, with your child's right arm under your left arm and around your back.



- Firmly hold his or her head tilted back between your right arm and chest.
- Put the medicine in the corner of your child's mouth toward the back and along the side of the tongue. Give small amounts at a time to avoid choking.
- When you have given all of the medication, hold and comfort your child. Offer a pacifier, bottle or cup.

Giving medicine to babies and toddlers can be frustrating. It is important not to yell or show anger. If you are having trouble giving medications, ask your child's nurse to demonstrate the procedure for you in the clinic.

- **For infants younger than 4 months old.** Use the method above. Have a pacifier or bottle of formula to use between and after medications.
- **For infants 4 to 12 months old.** You can use the same method above or one of these other methods:
 - Give ½ ounce of diluted fruit juice between or after medications
 - Give 1 teaspoon of baby food between or after medications
- **For children 12 months to 3 years old.** You can offer a variety of liquids or foods between and after doses, including:
 - Chocolate or strawberry syrup
 - Chocolate pudding
 - Cold milk
 - Fruit juice
 - Popsicles
 - Yogurt

General Instructions for Children 3 Years Old and Up

You can use any of the methods above or try one of the foods below between and after doses:

- Honey (never give honey to a child less than 1 year of age)
- Ice cream
- Jelly
- Peanut butter (use only in children 4 years old and older and use care to avoid choking)
- Chocolate syrup

General Instructions for Children 6 Years Old and Up

You can use any of the methods above. You can also offer the foods below between and after doses:

- Pixy Stix candy
- Ice chips
- Life Savers or other hard candy

Vomiting and Missed Doses

If your child vomits the medication within 20 minutes after giving the dose, repeat the dose. If your child vomits more than 20 minutes after giving the dose, we do not know how much of the dose has been absorbed, so do not repeat the dose.

If your child continues to vomit or vomits after every dose of medicine, contact your child's care team.



If your child misses a dose of medication, have them take it as soon as possible and then continue with the regular schedule. Do not re-time medicines after a missed dose.

If it is more than 12 hours from the usual dosing time, wait and give that dose at the regularly scheduled time. Do not double up and give two doses of the same medication at the same time. This could increase possible side effects.

Mixing Medication With Formula

Some caregivers try adding formula or other fluids to medicines when giving medications to babies. **We prefer that you not use this method.** If you must use this approach, limit the amount of fluid to one ounce. Otherwise, if your baby refuses the bottle, you will not be able to determine if he or she received the entire dose of medication. Sometimes, medicine can stick to the sides of a bottle or drinking cup. As a result, your baby will not receive the full dose. Also, formula and other fluids may not really disguise the bad taste of medications. It is best not to use this method when giving medications.