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safety... our priority.

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sécurité... notre priorité.

Your Child's Prescription

Important Questions to Ask

At some point, your child will probably be prescribed medicine. You may wish to ask your health care provider, such as your doctor or pharmacist, the following questions about your child's medicine. Write down the answers to help you remember them later.

Pharmacists are specially trained to answer questions about normal doses, interactions with other medicines, and what to watch for when your child is taking medicine.

1. What is the name of the medicine?

Many medicines have a brand name and a generic name. Ask if it matters if you buy the brand or generic medicine. Ask your healthcare provider for the correct spelling of both names and write these down. Different medicines may have similar names and spellings, which can cause mix-ups. When picking up medicines, check the labels to make sure the product name is the same.

2. What is the medicine for?

How does it work? What is the health problem it is being prescribed for?

3. How should this medicine be given?

Make sure you understand the information and directions on the medicine's label. How much should I give? How many times a day? For how long should this medicine be taken? Should it be taken with or without food? If the medicine is pills, ask if it is okay to crush and mix with juice or milk. Ask if the medicine has a taste that will be acceptable to children (is it sweet or sour, or is there no taste?), and what can be done to mask a "bad" taste. If the medicine is a liquid, ask the

pharmacy to give you the correct measuring tool like a calibrated oral syringe.

4. Ask if your child's weight has any impact on the dose.

How much of a weight change (gain or loss) would require a change in the medicine's dose?

5. How quickly will the medicine work?

Will I be able to tell if the medicine is having an effect, or does it work "silently"? What are the signs that it is working? How long should I wait before calling a healthcare provider if there is no improvement in my child's condition?

6. What are the common side effects that I may notice (e.g. sleepier than normal or an upset stomach)? What are the rare but possible serious side effects of this medicine?

What signs should I watch for that mean I need to contact a healthcare provider immediately? What if there is an accidental overdose: what do I do? How dangerous is it? How do I report such an event?



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7. My child has an allergy to... does this medicine contain anything that can bring on an allergic reaction?

Give information about all allergies, including food, environmental and seasonal allergies to your pharmacist and ask about possible interactions.

8. Is the medicine safe when given with other medicines my child may need, certain foods, or natural health products? When should this medicine not be used?

List all other medicines you give your child, including prescription, over-the-counter, and complementary or natural health products (e.g., Echinacea). Remember to ask your pharmacist if all of these can safely be given while your child is taking the prescribed medicine. Tell your healthcare provider about your child's existing

or past conditions, past reactions to medicines, or past experiences with using this medicine.

9. Ask the healthcare provider if the medicine has been changed in any way (amount, colour, taste or texture) from the last time it was prescribed.

Errors occur more often when there is a change. For example, the dose may increase or decrease, or in the past you may have been given a liquid form and now are given pills. You may also change your doctor or pharmacist. In such cases, you should share with the new healthcare provider the list of your child's allergies, other medications, and any natural health products. The ingredients of the medicine may have changed, so you should ask your pharmacist each time you fill a prescription. Parents should also take note if the pill or liquid looks, tastes or feels different from the last time.

Always Remember!

Ask how the medicine should be stored and how long it can be kept to remain safe and effective. For example, should the medicine be kept at room temperature, or refrigerated?

Remember to give other caregivers written instructions on the amount, timing and storage of your child's prescription medication, and advise them to watch for certain symptoms of serious side effects.

KEEP ALL MEDICINES OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN.

Reporting Suspected Side Effects

There are three easy ways to report a side effect to Health Canada:

- online at www.healthcanada.gc.ca/medeffect
- toll-free at 1-866-234-2345
- complete a Canada Vigilance Reporting Form which you can send by postage paid mail or fax toll-free to 1-866-678-6789. The form and the postage paid label are available at www.healthcanada.gc.ca/medeffect or by calling 1-866-234-2345

If you need information about how to manage side effects, please contact your healthcare provider.

Notes:

