

Introduction

Starship Children's Health is running an education campaign about the prevention of medication errors. You may have seen some of the posters around the hospital. The theme is based on the five principles of medication administration; **the 5 Rs:**

- 1. RIGHT MEDICINE**
- 2. RIGHT PATIENT**
- 3. RIGHT DOSE**
- 4. RIGHT ROUTE**
- 5. RIGHT TIME**

Unfortunately, errors with medicines do happen. They can happen in hospitals, at the GP clinic, at the Pharmacy and even in your own home. And sometimes these errors can cause harm.

However you and your child can help us at Starship to prevent errors occurring with medicines.



What can you do?

1. Tell the doctors about every medicine your child is taking at home. This includes any vitamins, minerals, herbal or homeopathic remedies, traditional medicines your child receives with or without a prescription. Knowing what medicines your child takes helps keep

your child's records up to date. This is important as it assists in your child getting quality and appropriate care.

2. Tell the doctors about any allergies your child may have and how your child reacts to medicines. This can help your child avoid getting a medicine that could cause harm.
3. Know your child's current weight. The dose of your child's medicine may depend on his or her weight so it is important to have accurate information about your child.
4. Never give any medicines to your child while they are in hospital without checking with a doctor or nurse first. All medicines given in hospital must be checked by a doctor or pharmacist to ensure that they can all go together without causing any problems for your child. It is also important that the nurses know every time you give a medicine to your child so that it is recorded in your child's notes. This is to prevent a medicine being given incorrectly to your child.
5. Always ask when a medicine is being given to your child, whether it is for your child and what it is. This is to ensure that the right child gets the right medicine. Your child's identity must be checked every time a medicine is given by nursing staff. This will be done by checking your

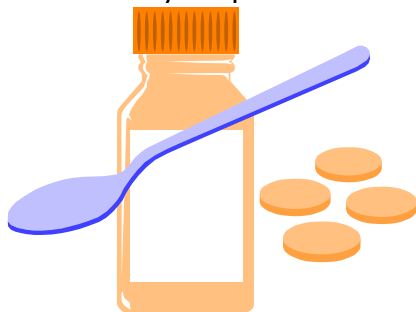
child's patient identification band or verbally with you or your child.

6. Ask for information about your child's medicines from your doctor or pharmacist. Some questions to ask:
 - What is the name of the medicine?
 - What is the medicine for?
 - Is this dose of medicine appropriate for my child based on his or her weight?
 - How often is my child supposed to take it and for how long?
 - What side effects could occur? What do I do if they occur?
 - Is this medicine safe for my child to take with other medicines or supplements?
 - What food, drink, and activities should my child avoid while taking this medicine?
 - How should I store this medicine?
 - When should I see an improvement in my child?

Knowing this information means you will be better prepared if something unexpected happens to your child. That way, you can report any problems right away and get help before it gets worse.

7. When you receive a prescription for your child, make sure you can read it and know what is on it. If you can not read the doctors handwriting, your pharmacist might not be able to either.

8. Medicines labels can be hard to understand. If you have any questions about the directions on your child's medicine labels, always ask your doctor or pharmacist before you take the medicine home. For example, ask if taking four doses daily means taking a dose every 6 hours around the clock or just during regular waking hours.
9. If the medicine's instructions do not match with what your child was taking before and you do not know why, check with your doctor to see why there has been a change. It may be a mistake.
10. Ask your pharmacist for the best way to measure your child's liquid medicine. A house-hold teaspoon does not often hold the correct measure and may result in under or over treatment of your child. Special devices are available like oral syringes to help people measure the right dose. Ask your pharmacist to show



you how to use this device.

- ***Be actively involved in your child's health care.***
- ***Get information that you can understand.***
- ***Speak up if you have any questions or concerns.***

Your doctors, nurses and pharmacists work hard to ensure that the care they deliver is the very best for your child but you can also help with this for your child.

If you would like more information about Medication Safety within Auckland District Health Board, contact

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Parent Information

Medication Safety

Help us to help you and your child

10 tips for parents /carers to help prevent errors occurring with medicines

