

# Medication - Refusal to Take

## Definition

- Your child refuses to take a liquid medicine

## Health Information

### Prescription Medicines

- Prescription medicines are usually important to take.
- You need a technique that will get your child to take them.

### Over-The Counter (OTC) Medicines

- OTC medicines are those that do not need a prescription. Most OTC medicines are not needed for symptom treatment.
- Medicines that are not essential are most OTC cough and cold medicines. Fever medicines are also not required for most fevers.
- Never try to force your child to take a medicine that is not needed.
- Most often, symptoms can be helped with other types of treatment.

### Fever Medicines

- Fevers over 102° F (39° C) that cause discomfort can be treated with acetaminophen suppositories. The rectal dose is the same as the dose given by mouth.
- **Other options.** If your child spits out or refuses ibuprofen, try oral acetaminophen (Tylenol). You can also try a different flavor or brand of the medicine. Other flavors or brands may taste better. If your child is old enough, you might also try chewable tablets. They may taste better than the liquid.
- For ALL fevers: Keep your child well hydrated. Give lots of cold fluids.
- For babies, dress lightly. Don't wrap in too many blankets. Reason: Can make the fever higher.

## Care Advice

### 1. Overview:

- Your child refuses to take a prescription drug.
- Young children don't understand the importance of taking a medicine.
- Forcing a struggling child to take any medicine can lead to vomiting or choking.
- Using a good technique can make a big difference.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

### 2. Sweeteners For Medicines That Taste Bad:

- Most liquid medicines have a good flavor or a flavor your child will accept.
- If your child complains about the taste, your job is to mask it.
- Mix the dose of medicine with a strong-sweet flavor. You can try chocolate syrup, strawberry syrup, or any pancake syrup. You can also use Kool-Aid powder.
- Medicines can safely be mixed with any flavor your child likes.
- Also, have a glass of your child's favorite drink ready to rinse the mouth.
- Tip: Coating the taste buds with the sweetener first may also hide the taste.

### 3. **Good Technique for Giving Liquid Medicine:**

- You will need a plastic medicine syringe or dropper. Reason: To prevent spilling the medicine. Do not use a spoon.
- Sit your child up. Never try to give your child anything while lying down.
- Place the syringe past the teeth or gumline. Some young children will settle down if you let them hold the syringe. Have them place it in their own mouth. Then all you have to do is push the plunger.
- Goal: Slowly drip or pour the medicine onto the back of the tongue. You can also aim for the pouch inside the cheek.
- Do not squirt anything into the back of the throat. Reason: Can enter windpipe and cause choking.
- Don't use household spoons for dosing. Reason: They vary in the amount they hold. They also often cause the med to spill.

### 4. **If Child Does Not Cooperate - More Techniques for Giving Liquid Medicine:**

- Caution: Never use this technique if the medicine is not needed.
- If your child will not cooperate, you will often need 2 adults.
- One adult will hold the child sitting on their lap. Their hands will hold the child's hands and head to keep from moving.
- The other adult will give the medicine using the technique below:
- You must have a medication syringe. You can get one at a pharmacy without a prescription.
- Use one hand to hold the syringe. Use the other to open your child's mouth.
- Open your child's mouth by pushing down on the chin. You can also run your finger inside the cheek and push down on the lower jaw.
- Insert the syringe between the teeth. Drip the medicine onto the back of the tongue.
- Keep the mouth closed until your child swallows. Gravity can help if you have your child in an upright position. Caution: Swallowing cannot occur if the head is bent backward.
- Afterward, say: "I'm sorry we had to hold you. If you help next time, we won't have to."
- Always give your child a hug. If your child was somewhat cooperative, also give them a reward.

## Call Your Doctor If

- You can't get your child to take the medicine
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

### **Pediatric Care Advice**

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