

Tip Sheet for Giving Oral OTC Cough and Cold Medicines to Children

Millions of American parents turn to oral over-the-counter, or OTC, cough and cold medicines when treating their children's symptoms. These OTC medicines have been relied upon by families for generations and are safe and effective when they are used correctly. When given as directed, OTC cough and cold medicines help treat your child's symptoms. But like all medicines, they have risks if misused.

Here's how to safely give and store these medicines:

1. Always read and follow medicine labels exactly and use the measuring device that comes with the medicine.
2. Do not give a medicine only intended for adults to a child.
3. Only give the medicine that treats your child's specific symptoms.
4. Never give two medicines at the same time that contain the same active ingredient.
5. Do not use oral cough and cold medicines for children under age 4.
6. Never use an OTC medicine to sedate or make a child sleepy.
7. Never give aspirin-containing products to a child for cold or flu symptoms unless told to do so by a doctor.
8. If your child develops any side effects or reactions that concern you, stop giving the OTC medicine and contact a doctor immediately.
9. Keep all medicines out of your child's reach and sight.
10. Talk to a doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare provider if you have any questions.

