



 man, woman and child  
Ghent University Hospital



# Preparation and administration of medication at home

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## 01. Introduction

The birth of a child is an emotional event. You can finally take your baby home, but your child may still need medication or vitamins. This leaflet contains information about the administration of medication at home. We will place a mark by what applies to your baby.

## 02. Points for attention when administering medication

- ✓ Check the prescription:
  - name of the medicine
  - correct dose (how much to administer)
  - how to administer (how the medicine should be taken e.g. by mouth)
  - expiry date
  - the prescribed time of administration
- ✓ Wash your hands before you begin.
- ✓ Have everything you need close at hand.
- ✓ Notify a doctor if you make a mistake.
- ✓ Ask the doctor if you have any specific concerns.
- ✓ Check whether the medication should be administered during, before or after feeding (e.g. some medication must not be administered in combination with milk).

## 03. Peroral medication

This is medication that is taken by mouth. These can be pills or liquid substances that are absorbed through the digestion system. In most cases, liquid substances will be syrup. Pills are available in the form of capsules or compressed powder.

Since babies cannot swallow medication easily, an adapted approach is often required.



### Syrup

This is a liquid medicine. For babies, we use a syringe to put the syrup in the mouth. This way we can administer the dose much more accurately and the baby can swallow the syrup more easily.

#### How do you do this?

- ✓ Put the syringe in your baby's mouth in the location of the cheek.
- ✓ Slowly squeeze the syringe so the liquid goes into your baby's mouth by his/her cheek; this will ensure your baby can swallow the medication.
- ✓ Your baby will be able to swallow the syrup more easily if given a pacifier to suck on at the same time. Clean the syringe with water afterwards.

### Vitamins in droplet form

When babies go home, they often receive vitamins, specifically vitamins D and K.

These vitamins come in a liquid form and are supplied in a dosing bottle. The liquid vitamins come out of the bottle drop by drop. This makes measuring the dose easy. You can administer the prescribed number of droplets directly into the mouth. If your baby drinks bottles, you can add the droplets to the bottle of milk.



### Compressed powder pills

This is medication that has been compressed into a tablet.

Babies cannot swallow pills. You must therefore crush and dissolve the medication with 2 to 5 ml of water or milk (depending on the prescription). Never crush medication unless your doctor has first said this is safe. If crushing is not allowed, then another form of administration must be found.

When the pill has dissolved, draw the medication into a syringe. The medicine can now be administered in the same way as a syrup (see "syrup").



### Capsule

In a capsule, powder medication is contained in a casing.

#### How do you do this?

- ✓ Open the capsule.
- ✓ Dissolve the contents in 2 to 5 ml of water or milk (depending on the prescription).
- ✓ Draw the solution into a syringe and administer the medication as a syrup (see "syrup").

Do not open medication in the form of a capsule. Check with your doctor first.

## 04. Ear drops

You apply ear drops in the ear, and they are available from the doctor on prescription.

#### How do you do this?

- ✓ Place your child in a sideways position (with the ear the drops are to be inserted into facing upwards).
- ✓ Gently pull the outer ear shell back and up slightly so that the ear canal is clearly visible.
- ✓ Apply the prescribed amount of drops along the wall of the ear canal.
- ✓ Let go of the ear shell and let your baby lie on its side for a while.
- ✓ If necessary, dry the ear with gauze.
- ✓ Do the same with the other ear if prescribed.

## 05. Eye drops/eye ointment

Eye drops and eye ointment are always applied to the eyes.

### Eye drops

- ✓ Place your baby on his/her back with the head well supported, chin slightly up.
- ✓ First, try out how hard you have to squeeze the bottle to get a well-dosed drop by squeezing a test drop onto a piece of gauze.

#### How do you do this?

- ✓ Grasp the bottle firmly between thumb and index finger.
- ✓ Pull the lower eyelid down slightly and squeeze the bottle so a drop of medication falls into the eye.
- ✓ To prevent the drop entering the nose and/or throat through the tear ducts, gently press the tear tip (corner of the eye on the side of the nose) closed for 10 seconds.

### Eye ointment

- ✓ Lie your child on his/her back, with chin slightly up.
- ✓ Take the eye ointment and pull down the lower eyelid.
- ✓ Squeeze the prescribed amount, usually 3 to 5 mm, into the lower eye pouch.
- ✓ Hold the lower eye pouch down for another 30 seconds until the ointment has melted.
- ✓ The ointment can spread over the eyeball while the eye is closed.
- ✓ If necessary, wipe off excess ointment with a compress.

## 06. Aerosol therapy

Medication can be administered to the airways using an aerosol by making use of air movement during breathing. The medication is evenly spread over both lungs using a nebuliser (aerosol device).

#### What is required:

- ✓ aerosol
- ✓ appropriate mask (must fit snugly) and tubing
- ✓ medication
- ✓ possibly a syringe with needle
- ✓ saline
- ✓ cleaning solution for the mouth
- ✓ water (for rinsing)
- ✓ detergent

#### How do you do this?

- ✓ Fill the mask dose pot with the prescribed medication dose. If necessary, this can be diluted with 1 to 2 ml of saline.
- ✓ Close the jar and apply the tubing and mask.
- ✓ Place the tubing on the aerosol device.
- ✓ Place the mask over your baby's mouth and nose and turn the device on.
- ✓ Sit your baby up on your lap.
- ✓ Administer the aerosol for no longer than 15 minutes.
- ✓ Remove the mask and turn the device off.

Afterwards, disassemble the mask completely. Wash the spray bottle and mouthpiece thoroughly with lukewarm water and detergent after each use. Then rinse under running water and dry all the parts thoroughly. Make sure the mask is completely dry; put it on a cloth and in a well-ventilated area. When administering corticoids in the aerosol (for example pulmicort®), it is advisable to give your baby a drink afterwards, or to clean the mouth with water to prevent fungal infections.

## 07. Do you have any questions?

If you have any questions or problems, always ask your doctor for advice.

**Do not forget to have the prescription for the medication renewed in good time by the doctor looking after you.**

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