

TEACHING YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT MEDICINES

As parents and guardians, you have the important jobs of protecting your children from harm and teaching them to make good choices as they grow and become adults. While they are still young, start talking to your children about medicines and how you choose medicines for yourself and for them. This teaches children how to use medicines safely and correctly, and how to avoid harm from misusing medicines. It also encourages them to ask questions about medicines. If you can't answer their questions, this is a great chance to show your child that it's okay to ask doctors, pharmacists, and nurses for advice about medicines. The examples below suggest the kinds of information to share with young children about medicines at different ages. Every child is different, so your child may be ready for some of these ideas a little earlier or a little later than the age suggested.

3-year-olds

- If you find a pill or a piece of candy, give it to a grownup. Don't taste it.
- Take medicines and vitamins only when your parent or guardian says you should.
- Tell a grownup right away if other children are getting into medicines.

5-year-olds

- Keep all medicines and vitamins out of the reach of young children. Tell guests to do the same.
- If you take medicine and feel worse, tell your parent or another grownup.

6-year-olds

- Read the label together with the person who gives you your medicine.
- At the doctor's office, ask the doctor to tell you: what medicine you will be using why you need to use it what the medicine does.

7-year-olds

- Know the rules for taking medicines at school and follow them.
- Don't take medicines in front of children younger than 4 years old. They may try to copy your behavior.

8-year-olds

- If you use medicine every day, write down the day and time you take it.
- Ask your parents to help you make a chart to fill in when you take your medicines.
- Tell them you will help fill the chart in.

Advice from FDA is a feature brought to you by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). You can find more on this topic at: www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/UnderstandingOver-the-CounterMedicines/ucm094876.htm. Also visit the FDA's Consumer Health Information Web site at: www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/default.htm to get the latest updates on medicines and products regulated by the FDA. Sign up for a free subscription to receive this information by email at: https://service.govdelivery.com/service/subscribe.html?code=USFDA_9.