On being a foster parent: “It’s not that I don’t have anything else to do. It’s the fact that I don’t have anything more IMPORTANT to do” – Author Unknown
Thank you for being a Foster Parent!

You can have more than one parent.

Foster parents are magic!
Safe Medication Administration for Foster Parents

Connecticut Department of Children and Families
What do you think about medications?
Child’s entry into foster care

A child may or may not be taking medications

*If medication/s are prescribed:*

*Foster parents are responsible for understanding and following directions given by the prescribing health care provider*
The goals for this training are to...

- Help you safely manage medications for your foster child
- Offer ways to gather more information about medications and safe medication practices
At the end of this training you will be able to:

- Identify the 5 Rights on a pharmacy label
- Review a label for an over the counter medication
- Explain how to safely store medication
- Explain “see something, say something” in regards to medication
- List ways to record medication doses and keep track of your foster child’s medications
Content review

- Reading medication labels – the 5 rights
- Over the counter medications
- Safely giving different types of medication
- Infection control
- Safe storage
- Record keeping
- Watching for and reporting side effects – “see something, say something”
- Filling and refilling prescriptions
- Medication events
- Resources
What you need to know about your foster child’s medication?

- The purpose of the medication
- The dose
- The schedule
- The route
- The duration of use
- The side effects
- How to respond to side effects
General types of medications

- **Prescription medication** – medication that requires a written prescription for a specific illness/reason for a specific person; should not be shared with anyone else.

- **OTC (Over-the-counter) medications** – medications that can be purchased without a prescription.
Psychiatric medication – medication prescribed for the treatment of mental illness or mental illness symptoms

Herbal or homeopathic remedies – variety of different substances following traditional practices. Not approved by the FDA and should only be used under the advise of a health care provider

PRN medications – medication given only when needed to relieve symptoms; not given on a routine basis
A generic name – a simplified version of the chemical name. Generic medications are usually less expensive than their trade name (brand name) counterparts.

- Example: acetaminophen, ibuprofen, naproxen sodium

A trade name (brand name) – a name chosen by and owned by the manufacturer. The same medication may have different brand names.

- Example: Motrin, Advil
Forms of medications

- **Tablets** or **caplets** – come in different sizes, shapes and colors

- **Capsules**

- **Lozenges**

- **Liquid** – suspensions, syrups and elixirs must be carefully measured. Some must be shaken well before use; some contain alcohol
Inhalants – designed to inhale into lungs. Most frequently prescribed for children with asthma. When properly used, should take effect immediately

Injections

Suppositories – designed for absorption from rectum or vagina

Other – creams, ointments, sprays, powders, patches, lotions and medicated shampoos
Route of administration

Depending on the form of a medication, the medication will be administered in a variety of different ways:

- **Orally** (by mouth) – tablets and liquid medication
- **Topically** – lotions, creams and ointments applied directly to the skin
- **Inhalation** – medications inhaled through the nose or mouth
Route of administration (continued)

- **Sublingual** – medication placed under the tongue

- **Rectal or vaginal** – for treating local infections or for medications that can not be taken orally

- **Injections** – generally, only nurses give injections. In some instances the foster parent might be trained or, the child may self administer with appropriate training and supervision
Infection control

- Contaminated (dirty) hands are a prime cause of cross infection (spread of infection)

- Hand washing is the most important and most basic technique in preventing and controlling the transmission of germs
Infection control (continued)

**DO:** Wash hands before preparing medications as recommended by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

**DON’T:** administer medication that has been contaminated

Discard medication that has been accidentally dropped on dirty surfaces

Minimize handling medications with your hands – wear gloves when needed
The 5 rights of medications administration

1. Right child
2. Right medication
3. Right dose (amount)
4. Right time
5. Right route
Medication administration

A foster parent should become familiar with the proper procedure for medication administration

Know how to read the medication label
Medication administration (continued)
Medication administration (continued)

The medication is **only** for the child whose name is on the label.

**Never** give medication to another child even if the child has similar symptoms or prescription!
How to read an over-the-counter medication label

**Drug Facts**

**Active ingredient (in each tablet)**  
Chlorpheniramine maleate 2 mg  
**Purpose**  
Antihistamine

**Uses**  
Temporarily relieves these symptoms due to hay fever or other upper respiratory allergies:
- Sneezing
- Runny nose
- Itchy, watery eyes
- Itchy throat

**Warnings**  
Ask a doctor before use if you have:
- Glaucoma
- A breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis
- Trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate gland

Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking tranquilizers or sedatives

When using this product:
- You may get drowsy  
- Avoid alcoholic drinks  
- Alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness
- Be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
- Excitability may occur, especially in children

If pregnant or breastfeeding, ask a health professional before use.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.

**Directions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults and children 12 years and over</td>
<td>Take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children 6 years to under 12 years</td>
<td>Take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours; not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 6 years</td>
<td>Ask a doctor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other information**

- Store at 20-25°C (68-77°F)
- Protect from excessive moisture

**Inactive ingredients**

- D&C yellow no. 10, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, pregelatinized starch

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Therapeutic substance in drug

When not to use this drug, when to stop taking it, when to see a doctor, and possible side effects

More information on how to store the drug

Read carefully: how much to take, how often to take it, and when to stop taking it

Other things in the drug, such as colors or flavorings
Medication administration (continued)

- "Take full course" means the child should finish the entire contents of the prescription even if the child is feeling better.

- "Take with food" means the medication should be given to a child after a meal.

- "Take on an empty stomach" means that the medication should be given one hour before a meal or two hours after a meal.
Oral medications

- Tablets and capsules: do not cut or crush any tablet or capsule without checking with the health care professional or pharmacist first.

- Do not open capsules unless you have been directed by the health care provider or pharmacist.

- Check expiration dates especially on OTC medications.
Crushed medication can be mixed with a small amount of yogurt, apple sauce or pudding, for example.
Oral medications (continued)

- Liquid medications must be carefully measured – only use calibrated measuring spoons, droppers, syringes or medicine cups.

- Use measuring spoons or cups provided with a medication.

- **Never** use a household teaspoon or tablespoon to measure medication!
Supervision

- Observe the child and make sure that the medication was swallowed completely.

- Always give fluids with all medications; water is usually the best option.

- When appropriate, a child might be trained in self-administration. Always monitor self-administration for proper technique and compliance!
When away from home

- If possible, medication should be scheduled to minimize the need for administration outside of the foster home.

- If medications are needed during the school day, consult with the child’s Social Worker to arrange for medication administration at school.

- It is best to give medication before and/or after short trips or, if needed during a trip, take only required amount and keep it safe and properly stored.
Medication scheduling and recording

- It is important to adhere to the dose and frequency prescribed for each medication.

- It is important to be consistent when giving medications – the foster parents are responsible for following the orders of the health care providers.
Medication scheduling and recording  (continued)

- A medication log is a helpful tool, especially for children with complicated medication schedule.

- Record the date, time, dosage and any relevant comments or observations.

- Keep a list of all child’s medications and bring it with you to all medical appointments.
#DIDYOUKNOW:
About four busloads of kids are seen in U.S. emergency rooms EVERY DAY for accidental medicine ingestion.
(safekids.org)

#DIDYOUKNOW:
Over 80% of emergency room visits for medication overdoses among children under the age of 12 are from unsupervised children taking medications on their own.
(cdc.gov)
Medicines and vitamins help families feel well and stay well, but children are curious. Always keep medicines stored up and away and out of sight.
Safe storage and disposal

- Ensure that medications are stored safely – out of reach of children and secured, locked if necessary

- Certain medications require refrigeration – the label will say “Keep Refrigerated”

- A cool, dry area is best for medication storage; i.e. a bathroom cabinet often becomes hot and steamy and is not a good location to store medications
Safe storage and disposal (continued)
Safe storage and disposal (continued)

- **Always** store medications in the container in which it was dispensed by the pharmacy.
- **Do not** remove the label until the medication is finished.
Medication disposal

- Follow any specific disposal instructions on the prescription drug labeling or patient information that accompanies the medication.
- Do not flush medications down the sink or toilet unless this information specifically instructs you to do so.
- Take advantage of community drug take-back programs that allow the public to bring unused medications for proper disposal.

As Recommended by the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration)
How to Dispose of Unwanted Medications

Are you throwing unused medications and over-the-counter products down the toilet or the sink? STOP!

Flushing medications down the toilet or sink causes water pollution, impacts drinking water and has adverse effects on septic systems, fish and aquatic life.

**Safe Ways To Dispose Of Medications And OTC Products Include:**

1. Follow the **directions, below** and **put them in the trash.**
2. See if your **pharmacy** has a low-cost **disposal envelope** to **send** away (CVS, Walgreens and Rite-Aid all do).
3. Find out if the **local police department** has a **locked drug drop box**.
4. Bring them to a **one-day collection**.

**Directions on how to throw away in trash:**

1. **Keep medication in its original container. Cross out patient’s name or remove label.**

2. **Modify the medications to discourage consumption.**
   - For **pills or capsules**: add a small amount of water to partially dissolve them.
   - For **liquid medications**: add salt, flour, charcoal, kitty litter or a powdered spice to make a pungent, unsightly mixture that discourages anyone from eating it.
   - For **blisters packs**: wrap pack containing pills in multiple layers of duct tape.

3. **Seal and conceal.**
   - Tape medicine container lid shut with packing / duct tape.
   - Place inside a non-transparent bag or container so it cannot be seen (i.e., an empty yogurt or margarine tub).
   - **Do not** conceal medicines in food products because animals could inadvertently consume them.

4. **Discard the container in your trash can. Do not put container in your recycling bin!**

   **NOTE:** Certain chemotherapy drugs may require special handling, so check with your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

For more information, go to [www.ct.gov/dep/medsdisposal](http://www.ct.gov/dep/medsdisposal), or contact:
CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, Office of Pollution Prevention; (860) 424-3257 [www.ct.gov/dep/pz](http://www.ct.gov/dep/pz)

*Thanks to Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance for permission to use parts of their brochure and the CT Department of Consumer Protection for their assistance.*
Filling and refilling prescriptions

- Ideally, all prescriptions should be filled and refilled at one pharmacy so that all medications are listed in one place.

- Keep track of how much medication you have:
  - How many pills?
  - How much liquid?
  - How many puffs left in the inhaler?

- Foster parents must assure sufficient amount of medications – to prevent treatment disruption, order/reorder child’s medications in a timely manner.
Side effects/adverse reactions

- Every medication has the power to help and the power to harm

- Some side effects are mild and will go away after your child takes the medication for a while

- Other side effects are serious and the medication must not be administered again

- Ask your child’s health care provider or pharmacist about possible side effects – what to watch for and what must be reported immediately
If you see something, say something!

Any unusual behavior (increased agitation, hyperactivity, aggression or sedation) might be the first sign of a side effect.

Any unusual body movement, drooling, difficulty swallowing might be the first sign of a side effect.

Fever might also be a sign of a serious side effect to some of the psychototropic medications.

If you see something, say something!

Report all suspected side effects to the child’s physician.
Medication events

Situations may occasionally arise that require actions, such as medication error or refusal to take medication.
Examples of medication errors (notify child’s SW and or Care Manager)

- Missed medication
- Wrong dose of medication
- Medication given at wrong time
- Medication given to wrong child
- Medication given via wrong route
- Discontinued medication given
- Outdated/expired medication given
- Contaminated medication (e.g., dropped on the floor)
- Medication abuse
When a serious medication error occurs (i.e. overdose or wrong medication)

- Contact Poison Control (1-800-222-1222)
- Contact the child’s health care provider or the pharmacist immediately for advice
- Observe the child for any possible side effects
- Contact the child’s Social Worker and/or Care Manager. After-hours contact DCF Careline (1-800-842-2288)
- Call 911 if needed
Medication refusal

- Children may express concern and refuse medications for many reasons.
- Take concerns expressed by a child seriously and try to address them before a child refuses the medication.
- Stress the purpose and importance of taking the medication as prescribed.
- Allow the child to talk to the child’s health care provider about their medication related concerns.
If the child still refuses

- It is the child’s right to refuse medication/s
- **Do not** force a child to take medications and do not penalize a child who refuses a medication
- Contact the child’s Social Worker and/or Care Worker and the child’s health care provider to determine the appropriate course of action
And remember....

- Always keep a list of all child’s medications (to bring to medical appointments, school or daycare)

- Have contingency plan in place – evacuation, loss of power, etc.

- Always administer medication to your child or, if age appropriate, allow supervised self administration – monitor your child for medication administration safety and compliance
Important resources

Child’s PCP/specialist

Pharmacy

Poison Control 1-800-222-1222

DCF Social Worker

DCF Health Advocate

DCF Careline 1-800-842-2288

Other: