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Safety & Prevention



Choosing Over-the-Counter Medicines for Your Child

"Over-the-counter" (OTC) means you can buy the **medicine** without a doctor's prescription. Talk with your child's doctor or pharmacist before giving your child any medicine, especially the first time.

All OTC medicines have the same kind of label. The label gives important information about the medicine. It says what it is for, how to use it, what is in it, and what to watch out for. Look on the box or bottle, where it says "**Drug Facts.**"



Check the chart on the label to see **how much medicine to give**. If you know your child's weight, use that first. If not, go by age. **Check the label to make sure it is safe for infants and toddlers younger than 2 years.** If you are not sure, ask your child's doctor.

Call the doctor right away if..

Your child throws up a lot or gets a rash after taking any medicine. Even if a medicine is safe, your child may be **allergic** to it.

Your child *may or may not* have **side effects** with any drug. Be sure to tell the doctor if your child has any side effects with a medicine.

Over-the-Counter Medicines

Type of medicine	What it's used for	What else you need to know
Aspirin		Never give aspirin to your child unless your child's doctor tells you it's safe. Aspirin can cause a very serious liver disease called Reye syndrome. This is especially true when given to children with the flu or chickenpox.
Hydrocortisone (high-druh-KOR-tuh-zohn) or cortisone cream	Treats insect bites, mild skin rashes, poison ivy, and eczema (EGG-zu-muh).	Ask the doctor how often you can put it on your child's skin. Don't put any on your

child's face unless the doctor says it is OK.

Never use this cream on burns, infections, cuts, or broken skin.

Pain and fever medicine

Helps fever and headaches or body aches. Also can help with pain from bumps or soreness from a shot.

Examples are acetaminophen (uh-SET-tuh-MIN-uh-fin) and ibuprofen (eye-byoo-PROH-fin). Tylenol is one brand name for acetaminophen. Advil and Motrin are brand names for ibuprofen.

Saline (saltwater) nose drops

May help if your baby is having trouble eating or sleeping because of a stuffy nose.

Put 1 to 2 drops into each side of the nose. Then use a bulb syringe to suck out the drops and mucus.

Using a bulb syringe can make the nose sore, so try not to use it too often.

Stomach medicines

Treats problems like heartburn, gas, not being able to pass stool (constipation), or loose, runny stools (diarrhea).

There are different kinds of medicines, depending on what the problem is. Talk with your child's doctor before using any of them.

Most of these problems go away on their own. Sometimes just changing your child's diet helps.

Some stomach medicines also contain aspirin, which can harm your child. See "Aspirin" on the first page of this handout.

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