

# Using Liquid Medicines

Many children's medicines come in liquid form. Liquid medicines are easier to swallow than pills. But they must be used the right way.

## Types of Liquid Medicines

There are 2 types of liquid medicines:

- Medicines you can buy without a doctor's prescription (called over-the-counter or OTC)
- Medicines a doctor prescribes

### OTC Medicines

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 6 years.** If you are not sure, ask your child's doctor.

### Prescription Liquid Medicines

Your child's doctor may prescribe a liquid medicine. These medicines will have a different label than OTC medicines. Always read the label before you give the medicine to your child. It is also important to always use the dosing device that comes with the medicine or that your doctor or pharmacist tells you to use.

With OTC or prescription medicines, be sure to call your child's doctor or **pharmacist\*** if you have any questions about:

- How much medicine to give.
- How often to give it.
- How long to give it.



### A Word About Infant Drops

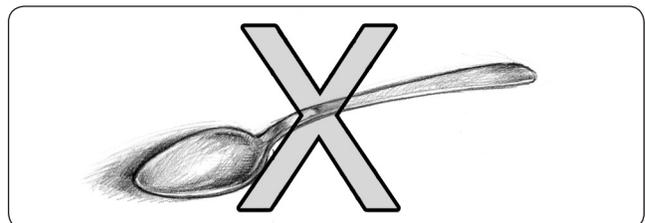
Infant drops are stronger than syrup for toddlers. Parents may make the mistake of giving higher doses of infant drops to a toddler, thinking the drops are not as strong. Be sure the medicine you give your child is right for his or her weight and age.

## How to Give Liquid Medicines

**Follow the directions exactly.** Some parents give their children too much medicine. This will not help them get better faster. And it can be very dangerous, especially if you give too much for several days. Always read the label carefully.

## How to Measure Liquid Medicines

Use the dropper, syringe (syringe), medicine cup, or dosing spoon that comes with the medicine. If the medicine does not come with a dosing device, ask your doctor or pharmacist for one that should be used. Never use teaspoons, tablespoons, or other household spoons to measure medicine.



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Medicine can be measured in different ways. You may see teaspoon (tsp), tablespoon (tbsp or TBSP), or milliliters (mL, ml, or mLs) on the dosing device.

### Tips

1 teaspoon (tsp) = 5 milliliters (mL)

3 teaspoons (tsp) = 1 tablespoon (tbsp)

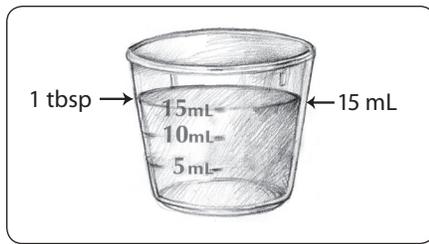
1 tablespoon (tbsp) = 15 milliliters (mL)

### Medicine Cups

Be sure to use the cup that comes with the medicine. These often come over the lids of liquid cold and flu medicines.

Don't mix and match cups to different products. You might end up giving the wrong amount.

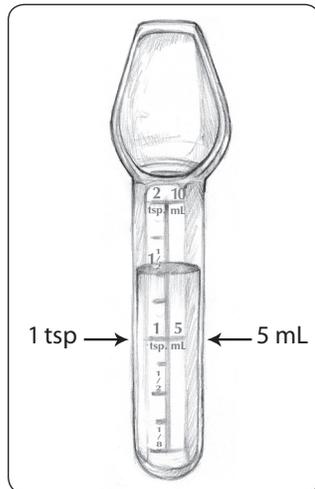
Don't just fill it up. Look carefully at the lines and letters on the cup. Use the numbers to fill the cup to the right line. Ask your pharmacist to mark the right line for *your* child if you are not sure. Be sure the cup is level. You can check by putting it on a flat surface.



1 tbsp is the same as 15 mL.

### Dosing Spoons

These work well for older children who can "drink" from the spoon. Use only the spoon that comes with the medicine. Be sure to use the lines and



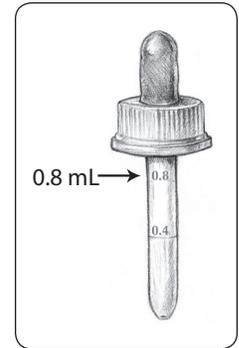
Fill the dosing spoon while holding it upright.

numbers to get the right amount for *your* child. Or ask your pharmacist to mark the right line if you are not sure.

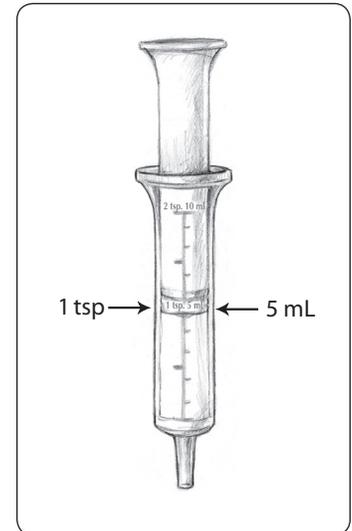
### Droppers or Syringes

Don't just fill the dropper or syringe to the top. Read the directions carefully to see how much to give *your* child. Look at the numbers on the side of the dropper or syringe. Use the numbers to fill it to the right line. Or ask your pharmacist to mark the right line if you are not sure. (If the syringe has a cap, throw it away before you use it. The cap could choke your child.)

Don't put the medicine in the back of the throat. This could choke your child. Instead, squirt it gently between your child's tongue and the side of the mouth. This makes it easier to swallow.



In this example, a dropperful is the same as 0.8 mL.



1 tsp is the same as 5 mL.

### Word to Know

**pharmacist** (FARM-uh-sist)—a person who has special training to fill prescriptions and teach people about their medicines.