

A Spoonful of Sugar Helps the Medicine Go Down....

Well, maybe not. Mary Poppins may have been able to make that work, but in many cases this may not be “the most delightful way”. Working closely with your pharmacist will ensure that your child will get the most from his or her medication.

Many children require adult drugs to sustain life for chronic conditions. Yet less than 60% of the medications used in kids have actually been studied in the pediatric population; next to none in neonates. Furthermore, many of the medicines don't come in a kid friendly form such as a suspension, or even one that tastes good for that matter.

Successful administration of your child's medicine can be challenging but is not impossible. Never refer to medication as candy. Children need to understand that although medicine may be necessary, it should not be abused. Be sure to talk to your pharmacist every time you purchase a prescription or OTC (over-the-counter) medication to ensure you understand fully how to administer it. Kitchen spoons should never be used to measure any medicine as they are not a precise measurement. Often smaller doses such as millimeters (ml) must be given so be sure to use an accurate measuring device such as an oral syringe or medicine spoon. You can also ask your pharmacist to mark on the syringe the exact dosage needed.

If you find your child has an aversion to the taste of the medicine there are a few options to help the medicine go down. Ask your pharmacist which ones can be taken with food and be sure to be specific. Some medicine can be taken with food but not with dairy products or acidic foods. Just remember that if you do add the medicine to food that your child must eat or drink all of the food containing the medicine to ensure he or she receives the appropriate dosage. A compounding pharmacist can also help you determine which foods mask the taste of the medicine best. Such pharmacists are also able to make pediatric dosage forms of adult drugs and ensure that they are not only palatable but stable. As well, dosages can be adjusted to more accurately address the changing medical needs as children grow and age.

Medicine has the power to heal, but also can do harm if not used correctly. Be sure you understand your child's medication by talking to your pharmacist.