

GUIDELINES FOR DISPENSING MEDICATION

1. All medications, including prescription and over-the-counter (OTC), must be stored in a locked location that is not accessible to children. Exceptions are made for “rescue” medications, such as inhalers and epi-pens or for medications that must be given outside of the home (eg. Diabetic injections). Under these exceptional circumstances, the foster parent must ensure that the medication is kept in such a way that is inaccessible to children.
2. Only foster parents, or other pre-authorized individual(s), should dispense medications.
 - a. If the child is required to take medication during the school day, arrangements need to be made with appropriate school personnel.
 - b. If the child is not considered responsible to take medication with simple observation, use the following steps:
 - i. Give one pill at a time
 - ii. Make the child take the pill with a glass of water and see that he/she drinks all of it.
 - iii. Observe the child and watch for swallowing
 - iv. Have the child open his/her mouth and lift his/her tongue up and move it to each side. Look for pills.
3. Prescription medication shall be given only as directed by a physician. Foster parents shall never skip doses, decrease or increase amounts, or stop medication without consultation from the child’s physician.
4. All medications shall be kept in childproof containers. All prescription medication shall be kept in the original packaging which clearly labels the name of the patient, medication name, dosage, prescribing physician and number or code identifying the written order.
5. Foster parents shall carefully read package inserts and/or pharmacy information sheet regarding administration (i.e. with food vs. on an empty stomach), safety precautions and side effects that may occur. Each medication has its particular, specific side effects, ranging from mild to potentially life threatening, and foster parents should be familiar with these. Contact the pharmacist if you do not understand the information/instructions.
6. Foster parents shall ensure appropriate disposal of out-of-date or unused medication, syringes, medical waste or medication from previous foster children. These may be given to the social worker or directly to the agency nurse.