

## Steps for Preparing Medicines

1. Wash your hands. Collect all necessary equipment:
  - a. Medicine bottles
  - b. Glass of water
  - c. Paper bathroom cup
  - d. Pill crusher (optional)
  - e. Kitchen tablespoon or teaspoon (for liquids)
2. Prepare the medicines on a clean, dry surface where you have space to work, like a kitchen or bathroom countertop.
3. **Take your time.** It is easy to make an error when you are rushed or distracted. Turn off the TV or ask to walk away from a family discussion.
4. If you are giving medicines to more than one person in the household, prepare the medicines for one person at a time.
5. Read each label on each medicine container carefully.
  - a. Check the person's name
  - b. Check the name of the medicine
  - c. Check the time of the day the medicine is to be given.
  - d. Check the number of pills/tablets or amount to give.

**REMEMBER – Give medicines at the same time each day if possible.**
6. Transfer a pill or capsule into a small paper bathroom cup instead of into the person's hand to prevent dropping of the medicine. Do not touch medicines with your hands.
7. If you can crush a medicine, use a pill-crushing device (available in medical supply stores or drugstores).
  - a. Always clean off the pill-crushing device before each use.
  - b. Use a damp paper towel and then dry off with a separate paper towel.
8. Crush each medicine completely and separately
9. Mix the ground medicine in a small amount of soft food like applesauce or custard. Be sure you remove all medicine from the pill-crushing device.
10. Prepare liquid medicines in tablespoons or ounces. Check the label on the bottle to determine if the bottle needs to be shaken. If so, shake gently.
11. Place the cap upside down on the counter, keeping the inside of the cap clean.
12. Hold the bottle with the label against the palm of your hand.
13. Take the time to properly check and prepare medicines to prevent errors.

## Steps for Giving a Medicine by Mouth

1. After preparing all medicines, get a glass of water or juice. Select a liquid the person prefers. Here's a tip: cold carbonated water helps tablets pass easily down the throat when swallowed.
2. Have the person you are helping, sit upright when taking medicines.
3. If the person is unable or not allowed to sit, have them lay in bed on their side.
4. Some persons like to place pills or capsules in their hands before placing in their mouth. Have the person take one medicine at a time.
5. If the person cannot hold a pill or capsule, have them place the small bathroom cup to the lips and introduce each medicine into the mouth, one at a time.
6. Let the person swallow liquid between each medicine.
7. Stay with a person until he or she has swallowed each medicine. If you are not sure whether a medicine was swallowed, ask the person to open their mouth and look for any remaining medicine.
8. Do not put your hands in a person's mouth to avoid risk of being bitten.
9. For **sublingual** medicines – have the person place it under the tongue and allow it to dissolve.
10. For **buccal** medicines – have the person place it between the gum and cheek and allow it to dissolve.
11. Do not let a person eat, drink, swallow, chew, or smoke until a medicine dissolves.
12. Mix powdered medicines with liquids as directed just before giving. Then give the mixture to the person to drink. If you prepare these medicines too far in advance they will thicken, making them difficult to swallow.