

Asking Questions about your Child's Medication

Anytime a medication is recommended you should ask questions about the medication. First, it's important to know how it fits into your child's overall treatment plan.

Treatment Plan Questions

- What is the role of the medication for my child?
 - For example: Will the medication cure my child's disease, eliminate or reduce symptoms, or prevent a disease?
 - Are there other treatment options for my child's health concern?
 - This might include non-medication therapies, alternative therapies, different medications, surgeries, etc.
 - How will the treatment plan impact our daily life?
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Next, it's time to become informed about the medication recommended. You don't have to ask every question. This is a comprehensive list of questions to consider asking your child's healthcare team.

There is more than one way to ask the same question. In the medical world, sometimes you'll hear lots of medical jargon. If you don't think a doctor or healthcare professional is understanding your question, try asking it using medical terminology.

Questions about what the medication is for and how it works:

Questions to consider asking:	How to ask the question using medical terminology:
What is the medication being used for in my child?	What is the indication of the medication?
What else is the medication used for that might alarm us when we are reading about the medication?	Is the medication being used off-label? Can the medication be used for other indications?
How long will this medication need to be used?	What is the duration of therapy?
Is it a single course of medication or a long-term medication?	Is the medication for acute or chronic use?
How long before the medication will start working to improve what is going on?	How long before the medication will have a therapeutic effect?
When should we call if the medication doesn't seem to be working?	When would the medication be considered treatment failure?

Questions about side effects and safety:

Questions to consider asking:	How to ask the question using medical terminology:
What tests and procedures will be needed to monitor for side effects and if the medication is working?	What are the monitoring parameters to assess for safety, side effects, and efficacy of treatment?
What should we monitor for and look out for at home. How frequently?	Who will be monitoring these parameters and how frequently?
What will the doctor monitor at each visit and how frequently?	
What are the risks of the medication?	What are the risks of the medication, including side effects, warnings, black box warnings, precautions, and contraindications?
What are common side effects?	
What are uncommon but serious side effects or warnings?	
What are long term side effects?	
What should we do if any of these occur?	What is the plan if these occur?

Questions about how to use the medication:

Questions to consider asking:	How to ask the question using medical terminology:
How does the medication come?	What are the available dosage forms for the medication?
How do we give the medication?	How is the medication administered?
Are there any special considerations when giving the medication (food, time of day)?	Are there any medication administrations considerations that will impact the efficacy or safety of the medication?
Are there certain foods or medications that can't be given while my child is taking the medication?	Are there any food-drug, herb-drug, or drug-drug interactions including over-the-counter medications?



Make sure all the people on your child's healthcare team know what your child is taking so they can check for interactions. Don't assume they already know, especially if your child has multiple providers or is using more than one pharmacy.

Questions about dosing:

Questions to consider asking:	How to ask the question using medical terminology:
Will the dose need to be increased and how frequently does that happen?	Does the medication require dose titrations for optimal therapeutic effect and at what intervals?
What if we miss a dose?	
How much and how often do we use the medication? Is the medication given daily or as needed? (If it is used as needed, how do we know when to use it?)	What is the dosing and instructions for use for the medication?



If your child has any known kidney or liver differences (or if you have ever been told your child might need different doses on medications due to their medical history) make sure to remind your provider when you are talking about medication dosing.

Think of your Own Questions

Add your own questions here:	Examples of Additional Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the medication a controlled substance?• How long will one fill last and how many refills are there?• Is there a process for refills?• Are there special storage instructions?• How should we dispose of any unused medications?• What happens if the medication isn't covered by the insurance?

Lastly, the catch-all question:

Is there anything else we need to know about the medication?