

STEPS PARENTS CAN TAKE TO HELP SCHOOL PERSONNEL OPTIMIZE STUDENT'S MEDICATIONS

This is an article on the steps parents (or guardians) can take to help school health personnel optimize their children's medication needs during "at school" hours.

The first step parents can take is to explain to your child about the need to take their medications at school administers medication so that you can teach your child what to expect. Explain that other children will also be taking medication at school and that this is a normal thing and necessary for their well-being.

Parents can also help if their child is enrolling at a new school. By gathering in advance the documents and records needed or required by the school system can speed and ease the enrollment process. Let's look at the needs of the following student types:

NEW and TRANSFERRING STUDENTS

1. These students will need proof or a copy of their *immunization record*. The enrollment process will be easier if the parent obtains a list of the required immunizations ahead of time and sees to it that the student receives any "missed shots" before the actual enrollment day. Most schools require vaccinations for Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (whooping cough), Measles, Hepatitis B, Polio, Rubella ("3 day measles"), Chicken pox, Haemophilus influenzae (Hib), Mumps, Pneumococcal and Influenza.
2. *Medication cards* that provide information and permission by either parents or physicians.

Comments:

1. Having proof of immunizations *can save parents both time and money*. Lack of proof may require a child to either get booster shots or under go possible re-vaccination.
2. The medication cards will be relied upon by school health personnel for guidance and must be accurate and complete.

RETURNING STUDENTS

These students at the beginning of each new school year need to update their medication records with the following information:

1. **Add** new medications recently prescribed.
2. **Remove** medications that have been stopped.
3. Note **changes** in directions for medications.
4. Make any changes in physicians, health plans, emergency phone numbers etc.

OTHER PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Keeping the school supplied with medication(s) in an original labeled prescription bottle. If there is a change a new bottle needs to be sent to school. **Know that the school nurse cannot change the directions for giving medication without a new prescription bottle or direct orders from the prescribing physician.**
2. Pick up unneeded or old meds from school.
3. Give the "at home" does routinely as directed. Let school personnel know if there has been a stoppage or problem, so they are aware of any possible changes in the student's condition or usual behavior.
4. Plan a medication schedule that keeps "at school" doses to a minimum.
5. Provide list of medication given only at home so school is aware of student's medical status.
6. List all medication **side effects or interactions**.
7. Convey any student limitations as far as field trips or athletics due to medication.
8. Realize that **non-prescription (otc) medicines are also controlled at most schools** for the protection of the students. Supply and/or sign any otc permission slips.
9. Provide any other pertinent information such as **food allergies** or special ways to give a medication that could help the school.

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