

Medication mistakes are common accidents that can be avoided. Medicine is the number one poison the Washington Poison Center gets calls about. Medications include prescription, over-the-counter, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Follow the 5 *rights* when taking or giving medicine:

- **The right person:** Be sure that the right person is using the medicine and does not take another person's medicine.
- **The right dose:** Always check for the proper amount. Consider writing down each dose to be given.
- **The right medicine:** Read the label each time to avoid making a mistake. Know the name of the medicine when giving or taking it.
- **The right time:** Follow the label and take medicine at the correct time of day. Some medications are used once a day, some four times a day.
- **The right way:** Follow instructions. Some medicines interact with certain foods, some need to be taken with food, and some should not be taken with other medications.

When one of the above *rights* is a *wrong* – call the Washington Poison Center *right away* at

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Other medicine safety tips:

- Know the abbreviations for tablespoon (Tbsp.) and teaspoon (tsp.) – use a medication measuring spoon or cup.
- Put your glasses on and turn on a light before taking or giving medication.
- Always use the child-resistant cap and remember they are not *childproof*.
- Offer your visitors a safe place to keep their medications, a locking box or drawer.
- Store your pet's medication in a different location than human medicine.

When a medication error does occur, do not wait for the person to feel sick; call the Washington Poison Center right away at 1-800-222-1222. If you are visiting another state, take the number with you; it works for every poison center across the United States.

Expert Poison Information 24/7