

of medication, the nurse may be faced with the dilemma of accurate dosage. With tablets, only those that are scored can be halved or quartered accurately. If the medication is soluble, the tablet or contents of a capsule can be mixed in a small premeasured amount of liquid and the appropriate portion given. For example, if half a dose is required, the tablet is dissolved in 5 ml of water, and 2.5 ml is given.

Administration

Although administering liquids to infants is relatively easy, the nurse must take care to prevent aspiration. While holding the infant in a semireclining position, place the medication in the mouth from a spoon, plastic cup, dropper, or syringe (without a needle). It is best to place the dropper or syringe along the side of the infant's tongue and administer the liquid slowly in small amounts, waiting for the child to swallow between deposits.

Nursing Tip

In infants up to 11 months old and children with neurologic impairments, blowing a small puff of air in the face frequently elicits a swallow reflex.

Medicine cups can be used effectively for older infants who are able to drink from a cup. Because of the natural outward tongue thrust in infancy, medications may need to be retrieved from the lips or chin and refeed. Allowing the infant to suck the medication that has been placed in an empty nipple or inserting the syringe or dropper into the side of the mouth, parallel to the nipple, while the infant nurses is another convenient method for giving liquid medications to infants. Medication is not added to the infant's formula feeding because the child may subsequently refuse the formula. Dispose of any plastic covers that may be on the ends of syringes because these covers are choking hazards.

Young children who refuse to cooperate or resist consistently despite explanation and encouragement may require mild physical coercion. If so, it is carried out quickly and carefully. Make every effort to determine why the child resists, and explain the reasons for the coercion in such a way that the child knows it is being carried