

levels in the blood. The nurse can help the parents plan the administration of the medication at convenient times, usually breakfast and dinner or bedtime, to make taking the medication as easy as possible. It is important to talk with the family about the importance of giving the antiepileptic medication as scheduled to prevent recurrent seizures. Usually, antiepileptic medications are continued until the child has been seizure free for 2 years (Braun and Schmidt, 2014). The medication is then slowly tapered over a period of weeks to decrease the possibility of precipitating a seizure. It is sometimes easy to skip doses or omit them for a variety of reasons, especially when the child is free of seizures most of the time. This is particularly so when the child is older and assumes responsibility for his or her medication. The seizure threshold may be lowered during any illness but particularly with fever. Therefore, parents should be aware that if their child has an illness, he or she is at increased risk for seizures. Parents should contact their health professional if their child misses medications during an illness because of vomiting.

Rectal preparations of some antiepileptic medications are highly effective when a child is unable to take oral medications because of repeated vomiting, surgery, or status epilepticus. Parents can learn to administer rectal antiepileptic medication for home treatment. Buccal and intranasal midazolam or rectal diazepam are useful adjunctive home treatment for children at risk for prolonged seizures or clusters of seizures and can minimize the need for hospitalization while enhancing parental confidence.

### **Drug Alert**

Children taking phenobarbital or phenytoin should receive adequate vitamin D and folic acid because deficiencies of both have been associated with these drugs. Phenytoin should not be taken with milk.

Nurses should educate the child and parents about the possible adverse reactions to the medications used to treat seizures. Parents must understand the rare but potentially serious side effect of allergic reaction to the medication. They must immediately report rashes to the child's health care provider. More common but less