

When inquiring about past illnesses, begin with a general question (such as, “What other illnesses has your child had?”). Because parents are most likely to recall serious health problems, ask specifically about colds, earaches, and childhood diseases, such as measles, rubella (German measles), chickenpox, mumps, pertussis (whooping cough), diphtheria, tuberculosis, scarlet fever, strep throat, recurrent ear infections, gastroesophageal reflux, tonsillitis, or allergic manifestations.

In addition to illnesses, ask about injuries that required medical intervention, surgeries, procedures, and hospitalizations, including the dates of each incident. Focus on injuries (such as accidental falls, poisoning, choking, concussion, fractures, or burns) because these may be potential areas for parental guidance.

Allergies

Ask about commonly known allergic disorders, such as hay fever and asthma; unusual reactions to drugs, food, or latex products; and reactions to other contact agents, such as poisonous plants, animals, household products, or fabrics. If asked appropriate questions, most people can give reliable information about drug reactions (see [Nursing Care Guidelines](#) box).

Nursing Care Guidelines

Taking an Allergy History

- Has your child ever taken any prescription or over-the-counter medications that have disagreed with him or her or caused an allergic reaction? If yes, can you remember the name(s) of this medication(s)?
- Can you describe the reaction?
- Was the medication taken by mouth (as a tablet or syrup), or was it an injection?
- How soon after starting the medication did the reaction happen?
- How long ago did this happen?