Administration of medication can be done orally, injection, slow-release patch, rectum. The oral medications come in different forms such as tablets, liquid etc.

For administering oral medications, we will follow 7 rights of medication administration and will ensure staff training is completed to ensure staff are competent and experienced to provide medication assistance for participants. Liquid medications should be measured using either a syringe, medication cup or special medication spoon. Occasionally a medication will be packaged with a graduated dropper for measuring doses.

* Check 7 rights of medication administration
* Check consent – ask the client if they are ready to take their medication
* Shake the bottle if required (read instructions)
* Measure correct dose
* Pour liquids into a marked beaker - put the beaker on a flat surface, bend knees and keep back straight, pour liquids at eye level
* Using an oral syringe - put rubber cone shaped adapter into the medicine bottle to draw up the correct amount, if any air bubbles enter the syringe put liquid back into the bottle and re-draw liquids, expel liquid into the idle of the tongue NOT the back of the throat
* Clean the bottle with a damp tissue before replacing the lid.
* If administering more than one liquid medication, ensure you use clean equipment for each medicine
* Liquid medications come in many forms – solutions, suspensions, syrups and elixirs.
* Pour each liquid medication into a separate container. Measure liquid medications on a flat, level surface at eye level to make sure you have the correct amount.
* Use only appropriate devices to measure liquid medications. If a medication comes with a special dropper, use that dropper ONLY when giving that medication.
* Assist the client as needed to an appropriate position with the head elevated. This helps the client swallow the pills better and helps prevent them from getting choked on the medications.
* Provide the RIGHT DOCUMENTATION.

There have been several incidents resulting in serious injury where doses of oral liquid medicines have been administered parenterally. These incidents have occurred using parenteral syringes to prepare liquid medicine doses resulting in inadvertent administration of the dose via the incorrect route.

The outcomes of this type of incident may be catastrophic and can be fatal. This policy has been developed to minimise the risk of serious injury or death from the support workers or nurses’ administration of liquid doses of medicines intended for other routes (principally oral or enteral).

* Oral/enteral dispensers (also called oral/enteral syringes) or graduated medicine cups

are to be used to prepare, measure, and administer all liquid doses intended for:

* Oral and enteral use
* Inhalational, intranasal, topical, or rectal use where measurement of volume is Required
* Injectable medicines intentionally prescribed for non-parenteral use
* Devices used for withdrawing liquid medicine doses intended for non-parenteral use from their container must have connections compatible with the oral/enteral dispensers

**Special consideration**

* Ensure systems and practices prescribed in this policy are implemented and sustained successfully.
* Clearly identify and store oral/enteral dispensers separately from parenteral syringes.
* Ensure that oral/enteral dispensers and compatible connectors are available at the point-of-care.
* Monitor compliance and practices described in this policy.
* Ensure compliance of staff with use of the devices as described.

Teaspoons and tablespoons used at home are not accurate and should not be used to measure medication doses. Medication cups are useful when giving medication to older children.

**Procedure**

Measuring Liquid Medication

When measuring liquid medication, a millilitre equals a cubic centimetre (ml = cc).

Other frequently used conversions:

* ½ teaspoon = 2.5 mL
* 1 teaspoon = 5 mL
* 1 tablespoon (or 3 teaspoons) = 15 mL

**Medication Syringe Instructions**

1. Fill the syringe with the prescribed dosage of medicine. Remember to measure the dose by lining up the top of the black line of the plunger with the desired dose or number on the syringe. (Your nurse may mark the syringe for the correct dose.)
2. Hold the syringe upright and gently tap the air bubbles toward the end.
3. Push the plunger gently to force the air out of the end.
4. Check that you have the correct amount of medication left in the syringe. Add more medication if needed. Squirt any extra medication back into the bottle if you have too much.

**Medication Cup Instructions**

1. To accurately measure a dose of liquid medication, place the cup on a flat surface and keep your eye level with the cup.
2. Pour slowly to the desired dose.

**Medication Dropper Instructions**

1. To use the dropper, place the dropper in the bottle and squeeze the rubber top.
2. Lift the dropper from the bottle and read the amount off the dropper.
3. To get to the correct dosage, gently squeeze the top of the dropper until the medication is in line with the desired dose written on the dropper.
4. Do NOT switch droppers from one medication to another. Often the dosing measurements can only be used for a specific medication.
5. Do NOT use a dropper with a medication unless the dropper comes in the package with the medication.

**Tips**

* If you have special concerns about the participant taking liquid medication, discuss your concerns with the doctor or pharmacist.
* Do not put the participant liquid medication into a bottle of formula or cup. If he / she does not drink the entire bottle or cup of liquid, you will not know how much of the medicine he/she has taken. Also, some medications may stick to the sides of the bottle or cup and then the participant will not receive the full dose.
* Give all medication as instructed, for as long as instructed. Do not stop medications early unless instructed to do so by the physician.
* Do not skip doses. If the participant misses a dose of the medication.

**Suggested Approaches to Ease the Administration of Medications**

* For infants less than 4 months of age: Using an oral (needleless) syringe, squirt the medication slowly into the side or the back of the mouth. Have a pacifier or bottle of formula to use between and after medications.
* For infants 4 to 12 months of age: Above method or try a half ounce of diluted fruit juice or teaspoons of baby food given between or after medications.
* For children 12 months to 3 years:
* Fruit juice or cold milk between and after doses
* Popsicles
* Yogurt
* Chocolate pudding
* For children 3 years and older:
* Any of the above options
* Peanut butter – use only in children 4 years and older and use care to avoid choking
* Jelly
* Honey (never give honey to a child less than 1 year of age)
* Ice cream
* Pixy Stix – use only in children 6 years and older
* Ice chips – use only in children 6 years and older
* Life Savers or other hard candy – use only in children 6 years and older