

Medication Instructions

Many medications will require instructions from a medical provider in addition to the parental consent. This includes all prescription medications and some over the counter medications. Usually the medical provider's instructions are written on the pharmacy label of prescription medications. If they are not, child care providers must have written instructions signed by the medical provider and the parent.

Documenting Medications

It is important for child care providers to document when they give medications. Sample documentation forms are available through the Snohomish Health District's Communicable Disease Outreach website. Be sure to include a full signature with first and last name at least once on the form.

Where will the Medications be Stored?

Child care providers will need to designate a place to store medications that is separate from food and adult medications. The medications should be inaccessible to children, usually high up where children cannot reach or climb up to them. Store external and internal medications separately. Some medications require refrigeration. If so, they must be stored in the same manner, away from food, away from moisture, and inaccessible to children.



The Communicable Disease Outreach Program offers consultations and STARS approved training to child care providers in Snohomish County. Please contact us for a copy of sample forms for you to use to track medication administration in your child care. We encourage child care providers to take advantage of our services to improve the health and safety of children in their care.

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Medications in Child Care

Advice for Parents and Child Care Providers



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When children need medicine during the day child care providers are called upon to make sure children receive them in a safe and effective manner.

Giving medication requires organization and planning. Mistakes can be avoided with a few simple guidelines. Child care providers should make sure they have a written medication policy in place which addresses:

- Who will give medication
- Staff training
- Steps involved in giving medication
- Special equipment
- Bulk medications
- Communication with families
- Medication instructions
- Documentation
- Storage

What steps are involved with giving medication?

1. Always wash hands before giving medication. Then, prepare the medication ensuring the 5 Rs:

- **Right dose**
- **Right medicine**
- **Right child**
- **Right route**
- **Right time**



2. Administer the medication.
3. Document on the appropriate form; make notes if any signs or symptoms are observed.
4. Return items to their proper place.
5. Wash hands again.

When special equipment is needed to administer the medication

If a child needs special equipment to have medication administered, such as an inhaler, an Epi-pen®, or a nebulizer, the family will need to provide special instructions on use and care of the equipment. Also, a special care plan should be written and followed with instructions on when to use the medication and how the child should respond. A public health nurse can support a provider through this process to make sure they understand the special instructions and provide additional information if needed. Epi-pens® should be stored out of reach, but not locked up. They should be in a location that can be accessed quickly in case of an allergic reaction. All staff should know the location of these items at all times.

Bulk Medications

When child care providers use bulk medicine for several children in their care, such as sunscreen, diaper cream or non-talc type powders it is necessary to obtain consent from the parent. Use the medicine for no longer than 6 months and decide on a method of administration that prevents germs spreading from one child to another.



Communicating with Families

Parents and child care providers must work together to make sure medications are administered appropriately. Prior to giving medications, parents must provide:

- written consent
- necessary instructions for when and how to give their child's medication
- how the medicine is to be stored
- why it is being given
- when the medicine is to be discontinued

Child care providers should communicate daily with the parents in writing:

- when medications were given
- if the medication was not working
- if there were unwanted side effects
- if any doses were missed and why