

Children who come to Dana-Farber/Children's Hospital Cancer Center may receive medications to treat their illness. The doctors, nurses, and pharmacists who take care of your child do everything they can to keep him or her safe during treatment.

But medication errors can happen, even in the best hospitals. Studies show that up to 7 percent of inpatients are injured because of mistakes with prescribed drugs.

**Your child's health care is a team effort, and you are an important member of the team. You and your family can help prevent medication errors.**



**One of the most important things you can do to make your child's medication use safe is to ASK QUESTIONS when you don't understand what is happening, or something doesn't seem right to you.**



*For more information about medication safety, call Dana-Farber at one of these numbers:*

*Pharmacy Department  
617-632-3338*

*Center for Patient Safety  
617-632-3291*

*Or visit our website at  
[www.dana-farber.org/patientsafety](http://www.dana-farber.org/patientsafety)*

*Reviewed by the  
Pediatric Patient and Family Advisory Council*

**What you need to know about medication safety**

Before, during,  
and after treatment

**A guide for patients and their families**

## *Before treatment*

**Your doctors need information about your child's medications to make sure new prescriptions don't cause problems.**

- ❖ **Make and carry a list of all medications your child takes**, including over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, or herbal supplements. Show the medication list to the doctor and nurse
- ❖ **Tell the doctors and nurses about any allergies** or bad reactions your child has had to medications in the past.
- ❖ **Learn what medications your child will take** during treatment. Ask what the medications do, how and when to take them, and what to do if your child misses a dose. Ask about possible side effects, and what you should do if they occur.
- ❖ **Ask if your child should continue to take his or her usual medications**, in addition to the new ones.



## *During treatment*

**You can help make sure your child gets the right medication at the right time.**

- ❖ If something doesn't seem right, **SPEAK UP**. For example, let someone know if a medication looks different, or the expected time or routine is different.
- ❖ **Don't let anyone give a medication without checking the hospital ID bracelet** and saying your child's full name or birth date.
- ❖ **When a nurse gives medicine (IV or oral), ask what it is.** Check the label to make sure it has your child's name and ID number on it.
- ❖ Don't give your child any medicine unless a doctor or nurse practitioner has prescribed it.
- ❖ **If your child has symptoms from medicine, tell the doctor or nurse right away.**

## *After treatment*

**Your child's prescriptions will probably change after his or her treatment ends.**

- ❖ Ask the doctor to **review the list of medications** your child may need to take after treatment. Ask if your child should resume taking any medications he or she may have taken before treatment.
- ❖ **Ask what to expect.** Let the doctor know about any unexpected symptoms.
- ❖ **Don't discontinue a drug or change the dosage** without talking with your doctor.
- ❖ Talk with your child's doctor or pharmacist before combining over-the-counter drugs with prescription medicine.

