

Using solid dosage forms of antibiotics for children

Information for parents and carers

1. Why am I receiving this leaflet?

The liquid forms of some antibiotics are currently not readily available. These antibiotics include phenoxymethylpenicillin, amoxicillin, erythromycin, clarithromycin, azithromycin, cefalexin and clindamycin.

So that your child gets the antibiotic they need, you have been given their medicine in the form of a tablet or capsule. You can use these to make a liquid or softer version of the medicine that your child will find easier to swallow. You will be advised on what dose to give by the child's doctor or pharmacist. In the case of tablets this may be half of a tablet or a whole tablet. Where the dose is for half of a tablet you may find that the tablet is scored and breaks easily. Tablet cutters can be used to cut the tablet accurately. These are available from pharmacies.

2. How do I prepare the medicine for my child?

To avoid any skin problems and to avoid inhaling the antibiotic, always wear gloves and a mask when you are preparing the antibiotic for your child.

If you are allergic to penicillin, cephalosporin or macrolide antibiotics, ask someone else to prepare the medicine for your child. If you are unsure whether it is safe for you to do, ask your pharmacist.

The advice below is for doses of half or whole tablets or whole capsules. If your child has been prescribed a different dose please ask your pharmacist for advice on how to prepare and give the dose.

If your child has been given capsules, you can open them and put the antibiotic powder inside into water or mix it with soft food.

If your child has been given tablets, you can:

- put the whole or half tablet (depending on the dose) into water so that it breaks up and disperses, then draw up the solution into an oral (or enteral) syringe to give the dose.
- crush the whole or half tablet (depending on the dose), then put it into water or mix it with soft food.

3. How do I disperse or crush the tablets?

Dispersing tablets to give your child a half or whole tablet dose

Using an oral syringe:

1. Place half a tablet or the whole tablet (depending on the dose) in a 10mL oral syringe.
2. Put the plunger back in and draw up about 5mL of water.
3. Take the syringe out of the water and draw up about 2mL of air.
4. Shake the syringe well and leave it until there are only tiny tablet particles in the liquid. This could take up to 10 minutes.

Using a small glass or medicine cup:

1. Put half a tablet or the whole tablet (depending on the dose) in a small glass or medicine cup and add 5 to 10mL water.
2. Stir well and leave until there are only tiny particles of the tablet in the liquid. This could take up to 10 minutes.

Crushing tablets to give your child a half or whole tablet dose

You can crush half of a tablet or a whole tablet (depending on the dose) between two spoons, or you can use a pestle and mortar or tablet crusher (if you have one).

4. Administering the medicine to your child

The dispersed or crushed tablets and the capsule contents taste unpleasant. You can cover up the taste by mixing them with **a small amount of**:

- a drink with a strong flavour, e.g. blackcurrant cordial, or
- soft food that your child likes, e.g. jam, apple sauce, yoghurt (about a teaspoonful)

Give the mixture straight away and try to make sure that your child takes the whole dose.

Use an oral syringe for liquids if your child finds this easier.

5. What do I do if my child has side effects?

As with all medicines, if your child experiences any side effects from their antibiotic, you should report it to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. You can also use the Yellow Card app (download from [Google Play](#) or [Apple App Store](#)) or the Yellow Card [site](#) to report side effects.

Further advice

Medicines for Children provides further information on giving [tablets](#) and [capsules](#) to children.

Off-label use of Medicines

Using medicines in the ways described above is 'off-label'. This is because the regulatory authority that approves medicines in the UK (the MHRA) has approved their use only if they are taken as solid tablets or capsules. Medicines are only used off-label after careful consideration of other available options. You can be confident that these options have been considered by the team caring for your child.

[Mae'r daflen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.](#) This leaflet is also available in Welsh.