

Dealing with a Medicine Shortage: Children’s Liquid Acetaminophen

When there are a lot of viral illnesses spreading among children at the same time (such as RSV and influenza), there may be shortages of certain medicines because of increased demand. This may include an increased demand for children’s liquid acetaminophen (Tylenol®) as this is used to help manage symptoms. This *Health Facts for You* will give you other treatment options you can use for your child if there is a medicine shortage.

Does my child need acetaminophen?

You do not always need to treat fevers as they are a normal way for the body to fight infection. If your child has a mild fever but is acting normal, they may not need medicine. If your child has a fever with aches, pains and is feeling unwell, you can treat with acetaminophen. Call your doctor if you are unsure if you should treat your child’s fever.

What are other treatment options?





If your child weighs at least 11 pounds (5 kg), they may be able to use a solid tablet form of acetaminophen instead of liquid. You may need to cut the tablets into halves or quarters using a pill splitter or a sharp knife.

The chart below will help you figure out the right dose. Make sure you are using either the **325 mg tablets or 500 mg tablets** depending on what dose your child needs (do not use the capsules or gel caps!). Ask a pharmacist for help finding the right tablets.

How do I give the acetaminophen tablets?

Tablets can be swallowed whole, chewed, or crushed. You can mix crushed tablets in a small amount of soft food (like applesauce or pudding) if this helps your child swallow the medicine. Repeat doses every 4 to 6 hours if needed.

Child’s Weight		Acetaminophen Dose	Acetaminophen Product*	How to Make This
Kilograms (Kg)	Pounds (lbs)			
5 to 8.1	11 to 17	81.25 mg	325 mg round tablets	¼ of a 325 mg tablet
8.2 to 10.8	18 to 23	125 mg	500 mg round tablets	¼ of a 500 mg tablet
10.9 to 16.3	24 to 35	162.5 mg	325 mg round tablets	½ of a 325 mg tablet
16.4 to 21.7	36 to 47	250 mg	500 mg round tablets	½ of a 500 mg tablet
21.8 to 27.2	48 to 59	325 mg	325 mg tablets	325 mg tablet
27.3 to 32.6	60 to 71	375 mg	500 mg round tablets	¾ of a 500 mg tablet
32.7 to 49.9	72 to 109	500 mg	500 mg tablets	500 mg tablet
50 and above	110 and above	650 mg	325 mg tablets	Two 325 mg tablets

One Half (1/2) Tablet	One Quarter (1/4) Tablet	Three Quarters (3/4) Tablet
 OR 		

*Round tablets are easier to cut into equal-size pieces, especially for quarter (1/4) tablets. Scored tablets that are not round work well to cut in half (1/2) but not as well to cut into quarters (1/4).

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 12/2022 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#8266.