

Tips for Giving Medication to Pediatric TB Patients

The following tips are based on information shared by Anne Flannery-Lundgren, RN, of the Montgomery County Health Department; Annamarie Hand, Disease Surveillance Investigator with the Philadelphia TB Control Program; Dr. George McSherry, State Pediatric TB Consultant; and a brochure by the Global TB Institute at Rutgers titled, "What Parents Need to Know About TB Infection in Children," available online at <http://globaltb.njms.rutgers.edu/downloads/products/tbpedsbrochure.pdf>.

Given a lack of pediatric dosage forms for most anti-TB drugs, it can be very difficult to give the medication to an infant or child over many months. Here are some tips:

- In cases where window prophylaxis treatment is prescribed,
 - Emphasize to the parent(s) that such treatment is necessary to reduce the risk of the child developing more serious forms of TB such as TB meningitis; and
 - Let the parent(s) know that if the second TB test is negative, then the medication can be stopped. If the second TB test is positive, the infant or child has already started treatment by being given window prophylaxis.
- Engage the parent(s) in preparing the medication and giving it to the child.
- Be calm, honest and soothing—but firm—with the child.
- Praise the child for taking the medication.
- Consider creating a pleasant routine around taking the medicine using distractions (a hand puppet or a spinner with lights) or age appropriate small food rewards (such as gummy worms).
- Crush the tablet(s) using a pill crusher, mix in a little warm water to create a slurry, and stir the slurry into a small amount of applesauce or pudding.
 - The slurry can also be mixed with juice or with chocolate syrup in milk — the sweetness of the juice and chocolate syrup helps to mask the flavor of the pills.
- For infants, consider administering the medication when the baby is hungry.
 - Put a small amount of the medication slurry in the tip of the bottle nipple when feeding an infant warm breast milk or formula. Do this repeatedly during the feeding until all the slurry mixture has been administered.
- Be sure that the child consumes all the food or beverage in which the medication has been mixed.