

Is Hiding Medicine In Your Child's Food Wrong?

Submitted by Sarah Fitz-Claridge on 9 August, 2003 - 09:11

It depends. If Suzy has an ear infection, giving her some of Uncle Derek's Viagra would of course be wrong, however you administer it.

If Suzy doesn't want to take her medicine because she has read that this particular medicine is now thought to cause cancer and is about to be withdrawn, it would be wrong to cause her to take it without her knowledge.

But if Suzy simply objects to the taste of the medicine but otherwise has no objection to it, there is nothing wrong with hiding the medicine in her portion of curry so that she takes it without suffering. If it is the taste that she objects to, and you address that problem adequately, you have solved the problem. (That might be a good TCS solution for medicine taken only once a day, but the child might not want curry three times a day. (See [this](#) article for other possible solutions to this problem of horrid-tasting medicine.)

Whether or not you should tell the child that you are doing this is a matter of judgement. I don't think it is necessarily a bad thing not to tell the child. If the child is expecting to taste disgusting medicine, she might well taste it, whereas if she is not, she might not notice. You should of course take great care to ensure that the flavour is masked properly so that the child does not get a nasty shock.

If your child is not currently taking any medication, you might want to raise this issue with her now, explaining all the considerations, and discuss it. She might well like the idea of your carefully hiding her yukky-tasting medicine in food and not want you to tell her. Or she might prefer to know despite the increased risk that she will detect the medicine.

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Comments

This reminds me of a similar experience as a child

Submitted by violet_yoshi (not verified) on 5 June, 2005 - 13:41

My parents wanted me to take this pill and I was afraid to. It wasn't like out of cruelty that they were forcing me to take the pill, the medicine only was in pill form apparently.

So they told me not to worry about it and have ice cream. I found the pill in the ice cream anyways, and was still upset. Now I think it's funny though, like "Ha! You can't pull one over on me!"

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Aren't we missing something more essential ..

Submitted by human (not verified) on 6 August, 2006 - 03:35

I feel, hiding medicine even when the child's only objection is to the bad taste of it, is still not respecting the child as an individual. I would rather try to make her/him understand it is a good idea to take it with food so it won't taste bad and will help cure the illness. The idea is, how long you are going to keep hiding the medicine ..? Until the child is grown enough to know the difference. And how would we know the child has the conscience to know the difference - whatever not-so-grown-up way it be? By trying to make the child understand.

Well if that did not work (very possible with a lot of kids) then probably I would hide the medicine in the food, for lack of a better strategy (help me here, if you can think of) while waiting for her/him to grow up.

Your thoughts?

-R

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child unable to swallow pill

Submitted by Kendell (not verified) on 14 February, 2007 - 18:26

Suppose a seven year old child has been prescribed a medication in pill form. It has been a week and she is still having trouble swallowing it. You've tried to "coach" her through it but after hours she is still frustrated with the pill still in her mouth. The medication doesn't come in any other form. Any suggestions????

Thanks, Kendell

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i would...

Submitted by canyonstar on 16 February, 2007 - 16:49

...talk to a pharmacist about it. first, I might crush it up and put it in something palatable to child - not secretly, but in the search for a way to help him get the medicine s/he wants to take, since s/he has agreed that is the way to better health.

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Medical Rights

Submitted by a reader (not verified) on 19 February, 2007 - 17:51

Children aren't given any medical rights, legally you can shove the pill down their throats. It's sad but true, inequality's a bitch.

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It depends on many parameters

Submitted by cem (not verified) on 22 February, 2007 - 15:15

Like age, seriousness of sickness, how bad kid feels, what is his mood due to sickness. Your actions and their reactions may differ. Sometime you will have to do the wrong thing for the good of your child in a little panic mode, sometime you will do the right thing. There cannot be consistent behaviours in the life in all different circumstances. Sometime my kid refuses bad taste medicine, sometime he accepts if he really feels bad and my explanation is convincing. When there is a conflict with kid, I can try to solve it peacefully if I have the time, nerves and patient. (yes conditions, always conditions) Because I am a human being, I also have problems, other responsibilities, works, bad days etc. If I had a bad day and am in bad mood and kid arrogantly refuses a medicine, he is not communicable, I can be rude, he suffers, he might have a bad day too. But this is how human families live. We only try to have more good days and less bad days for each other. There is no consistent or methodic way or deterministic state of mind to take your child always same serious level !

The only good idea in this article is to talk about health, illness, medicine, bad tastes etc, when kid does not have to take the medicine. So there is no conflict or frustration. Then he could learn things and you can either explain things in the way he could grasp and accept, or implement an idea of taking bad tasted drugs when we are really sick is necessity. Yes, at certain age, you have to implement the idea, in some ages you can explain the idea. In some ages and moods you can even get positive feedback or childish solutions on how to give bad taste medicine to childs. It all depends on age and mood of the day... Sometime works, sometime does not. And more over, when you think you have a solution or concensus or even promise, after a month, you'll see your 6 years old completely forgot it and find his own new arrogant way to resist taking medicine... Start all over again...

These are little kids, we are not talking about adults... May be David can provide us an ultimate formula how much they can be taken seriously at certain age and mood... :-)

Best regards.

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How to get a child to take a pill.

Submitted by supermom (not verified) on 19 May, 2007 - 06:37

My seven year old was prescribed medication. The first three pills she spit out. Finally, I put the pill in a spoonful of cold pudding. Worked wonders. Not only did the medicine work, but she can now very easily take a pill. She doesn't even feel it. Good Luck.

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Aren't we missing something more essential..

Submitted by a reader (not verified) on 16 May, 2009 - 20:02

I don't think we are disrespecting them as an individual as you are in fact respecting their limitation of knowledge. They may refuse a medicine but their lack of knowledge or fear of the unknown could be detrimental to their health. By not giving them a medicine they need, they are being disrespected. If i did that to my asthmatic son when he was a baby and fearful of the face mask that goes with his inhaler he would not be with us now. Instead i explained what needed to be done and when he still protested I explained I have to do it to make him feel better and then did it. I helped him overcome his fear by counting the breaths he had to take by counting birds, cars etc and letting him decorated the spacer and mask. He soon realised there was nothing to fear and that this was helping him. When he was very bad in the beginning a wise nurse told me to give it to him in his sleep taking care not to wake him. This no doubt save his life

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