

Procedure Box 9-2 Administration of Liquid Medications

- Observe the seven “rights” of medication administration.
- Read the medication order, and compare it with the medication container.
- Wash hands.
- Compare the medication order with the container a second time. Check the expiration date.
- Assemble equipment needed: medication, order, calibrated medication cup.
- Identify the patient, and explain what you will be doing.
- Shake the bottle if needed.
- Compare the order and the container a third time.
- With the container on a flat surface, pour the correct amount of medication. The top of the fluid (meniscus) should be at the calibration line ordered. If you pour too much, you must dispose of the excess. Do not return the excess to the stock bottle.
- Give the patient the liquid medication.
- Instruct the patient to swallow the medication completely. (Never leave until you witness the patient taking medication.) If medicine is thick or tastes bad, offer patient water afterward.
- Assess the patient for any negative response (e.g., choking).
- Wash hands.
- Document medication administration and the patient’s response.

Example:

03/02/2013 3:45 p.m.: 125 mg Tylenol drops given PO. Patient tolerated well. CJ Watkins RN, MSN

Nasogastric Tube Medications and Administration

Most liquid oral forms of medications can be administered through a nasogastric (NG) tube, which leads from the nose to the stomach, or a gastric tube, which a surgeon places directly into the patient’s stomach under sterile conditions (Procedure Box 9-3). These tubes are used for patients who, for various reasons, have trouble swallowing or ingesting an adequate diet for optimal health.

Only liquids or tablets that have been crushed and mixed in water can be delivered through the tube. Before the drug is given, the NG tube must be checked to ensure proper placement. NG tubes may become displaced, with the tip in the respiratory system, and this can lead to aspiration pneumonia or death if fluid is administered by this route. Be sure to flush the tube with NSS before and after medications are administered to keep the tube patent (Fast Tip 9.2).

Procedure Box 9-3 Administration of Medications by Nasogastric or Gastric Tube

- Observe the seven “rights” of medication administration.
- Read the medication order, and compare it with the medication container.
- Wash hands.
- Compare the medication order with the container a second time. Check the expiration date.
- Assemble equipment needed: syringe, medication, flushing fluid, order.
- Compare the order and the container a third time.
- Identify the patient, and explain what you will be doing.
- Elevate the patient’s head.
- Hold end of tube up, and remove the clamp, plug, or adapter.
- Attach an empty syringe (without a needle) to the port.
- Verify the tube is in the stomach (see Fast Tip 9.2).
- Use the syringe to flush the tube with NSS.
- Use the syringe to administer medications.