

Guidance on switching children from liquid antibiotics to tablets/ capsule medication

Ensuring children receive the most appropriate antibiotic formulation is an important part of safe and effective prescribing. This document provides a practical conversion table to support health professionals in translating liquid antibiotic doses into equivalent tablet or capsule doses. It has been developed by your local children's antimicrobial stewardship team to help clinicians confidently consider solid-dose options for children who may be suitable for them.

Tablets	Liquids
Do not coat mouth	Sugary and cause tooth decay
No or minimal taste	Taste bad
Long expiry dates	Short expiry dates
Easy storage	Keep in fridge
Smaller to store	Bulky
Better availability	Harder to source
Easy dosing	Tricky dosing
Cheaper generally	Expensive
Standardised contents	Less accurate and more prone to error
Lower carbon footprint	Less environmentally friendly

Getting Started

Parents and guardians may never have considered teaching their child to swallow tablets before. Why not mention the idea in your consultations? When you prescribe, ask 'can your child swallow tablets?' parent's are often open to teaching their children to make administering medicine easier!

Remember, even floating the idea might mean they are ready to try next time so don't be disheartened if parents and children are not ready to try tablets instead of liquids on this occasion.

Sign post to resources such as [Medicines for Children](#) to see videos and printable resources like the one on page 3.

As a prescriber you can consider giving two small tablets in place of one larger tablet. Additionally, ask your community pharmacist about which tablets can be broken.

Antibiotic Form Conversion Table

The liquid to tablets/capsules conversion chart you see here has been developed by the local Antimicrobial Stewardship Team to assist clinicians in prescribing tablet or capsule formulations for paediatric patients aged over 4 years and weighing at least 12 kg.

Drug name and dose	Liquid (Oral Suspension)	Tablet/ Capsule
Amoxicillin 250mg	5ml x 250mg/5ml oral suspension	1x 250mg capsule
Amoxicillin 500mg	10ml x 250mg/5ml oral suspension	1x 500mg capsule
There is no tablet option for amoxicillin doses less than 250mg.		
Clarithromycin 250mg	5ml x 250mg/5ml oral suspension	1x 250mg tablet
Clarithromycin 500mg	10ml x 250mg/5ml oral suspension	1 x 500mg tablet
There is no tablet option for Clarithromycin doses less than 250mg.		
Erythromycin 250mg	5ml x 250mg/5ml oral suspension	1x 250mg tablet
Erythromycin 500mg	10ml x 250mg/5ml oral suspension	1x 500mg tablet
Do not prescribe Erythromycin tablets for children under 20kg. There is no tablet option for Erythromycin doses less than 250mg.		
Flucloxacillin 250mg	5ml x 250mg/5ml oral solution	1x 250mg capsule
Flucloxacillin 500mg	10ml x 250mg/5ml oral solution	1x 500mg capsule
There is no tablet option for Flucloxacillin doses less than 250mg.		
Penicillin V (phenoxymethylpenicillin) 250mg	5ml x 250mg/5ml oral solution	1 x 250mg tablet
Penicillin V (phenoxymethylpenicillin) 500mg	10ml x 250mg/5ml oral solution	1 x 500mg tablet
There is no tablet option for Penicillin V (Phenoxymethylpenicillin) doses less than 250mg.		

Please note that this resource is intended as a supplementary aid and does not replace established prescribing guidelines or clinical judgement. Selection of dose and regimen should be guided by the *British National Formulary for Children (BNFc)* or similar and applied only when clinically appropriate and when the child has been assessed as being capable of taking solid oral dosage forms.

Tablet Swallowing Support for Patients

Top Tips for Tablet Swallowing Practice

- Have the drink in a bottle with a sports cap or in a glass/container with a straw.
- Use stories (such as waterfall that washes pebble away)
- Make the process a fun experience
- Try not to bargain or bribe the child
- Store any real medication securely and out of sight and reach of children



References and Resources List

Resources:

[Kidzmed](#) have developed a great leaflet for parents, carers and guardians as well as the poster on the last page and a certificate for children who have succeeded in learning to swallow tablets. You can also find a whole list of interesting podcasts on the topic and a video of how a children's nurse teaches tablet swallowing to children.



[Healthier Together](#) is an excellent resource for patients and health professionals, you can find further information and local information via this website on many health topics and across all age groups. There's also some useful information about how to manage children refusing to take their medicines.



[NHS Learning Hub](#) hosts a useful eLearning module which is short and explains well the many reasons to consider prescribing tablets in children.



References:

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Mistry, R., Lim, E. and Tse, Y. (2024) Kidzmed. [online] <https://learninghub.nhs.uk/catalogue/KidzMed> Accessed 03 February 2026.

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