

A B C D E F G H Children's Health

Taking Medicine in School—Safely

(NAPSA)—It's a healthy idea: if your child needs to take medication during the school day, as many millions do, it's important for parents to team up with their pediatrician, pharmacist and school nurse to ensure the medicine is taken properly, medical experts agree.

Spending on prescription drugs for infants, children, adolescents and young adults has increased by 85 percent during the last five years. In addition, one out of every two children takes at least one prescription medication a year, according to research released in conjunction with Medco Health Solutions' 2002 Drug Trend Report.

"In the past five years, there have been increases in conditions ranging from asthma and allergy to attention deficit disorder, so the prevalence of treatments for these conditions has increased as well," says Dr. Robert Epstein, chief medical officer, Medco Health. "Many of these treatments may need to be taken during the school day."

For parents whose children may be required to take medications during school hours, or may get sick during the school day and need medicine, Dr. Epstein offers the following tips:

- All medication sent to school for your child should be in the original containers with original labels. Ask your pharmacist to split your child's prescription into two labeled bottles—one for school, one for home.

- Find out who is authorized to give your child medications—school physician, nurse or teacher. It's important to remain in contact with that person in case of a change in your child's medication or if an emergency arises.

- Submit all necessary paperwork regarding your child's in-school healthcare, including consent forms, a list of all of your child's medications, as well as contact numbers for you, your child's pediatrician and your pharmacist. Include a specific request for the nurse to give the medications, specific conditions being treated, a



One out of every two children currently takes a prescription medication—medicine that often must be taken during school hours.

list of any prescription or OTC medications your child is currently taking, side effects and storage requirements.

- Contact the school nurse directly to discuss the procedures and limitations for giving OTC medications. Make sure the nurse contacts you if he or she gives your child an OTC during the day; OTCs may cause adverse drug reactions with some prescriptions and foods.

- Most school districts do not allow medications to be transported to school by the child; parents must deliver the medication directly to the school.

- Ask your child's school about creating a standing order for emergency medication administration, such as medication for allergies to bee stings.

- Take the time to explain to your child what medications they are taking, when they should take them, whom they should take them from and why they are taking them. Knowledge is power—and helps ensure greater safety.

For more information about the Medco Health Solutions 2002 Drug Trend Report, visit the Web site at www.medcohealth.com.