

SCHOOL HEALTH

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MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

Did you know that you cannot send medication to school for your child to take or for your child's teacher to give unless you get written authorization from your physician? School district policy prohibits students from carrying any medication without an authorization form on file at the school. If a student carries medication without authorization they can be found in violation of the school's drug-free policy and could face suspension or expulsion. You have probably seen stories on the news where this has happened.

For our purposes "medication" means any prescription or over-the-counter remedies. This includes (but is not limited to) Tylenol, ibuprofen, cold pills, inhalers, EpiPens, insulin, allergy medication, antibiotics, and even herbal remedies. In other words, everything needs an authorization form signed by your practitioner.

So what can you do if your student needs medication during school hours? You can 1) get an authorization form from the office to take to your doctor for their signature, or 2) a parent/guardian can come and administer the medication each time it is needed.

The physician can specifically write on his authorization form that he wants the student to carry the medication with him/her at all times. This is usually the case with an asthma inhaler or EpiPen (used for severe allergies). Unless it is written this way, the medication must be kept in the office where the student must come if treatment is needed.

Once we have the authorization form on file at school it is good for a year from the date the doctor signed it, unless he/she makes any changes in medication or dose.

If changes are made, a new, signed authorization form is needed.

We do have one exception - in our district Tylenol (or acetaminophen) may be given without a written authorization from your doctor if we obtain telephone permission from a parent/guardian each time the student needs it.

One last thing about medication: once we have the authorization on file you need to know it will probably not be given by a nurse. In Utah County we are not lucky enough to have a nurse at each school. In fact, one nurse often covers 6 or 7 schools and several thousand students (as in my case). This means the office staff and teachers are often the ones to administer first aid and give the medication. They volunteer to do this. Once we find a staff member willing to give the medication, I will train them in how to give it. We are very grateful we have the terrific staff that we do and who are willing to help us out with this and so much more!

