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Assisting an Individual with Self-Administration of Medications

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Step 1: Get the Medication Administration Record for the individual

- Double check that you have the MAR for the right individual
- Work with only **one individual** at a time

Step 2: Gather supplies

- Paper cups for tablets and capsules; plastic calibrated measuring cup or medication spoon for liquid
- Get a glass of water
- Get a pen

Step 3: Wash hands

- Wash your hands and help the individual you are assisting wash their hands
- Put on gloves for the following steps

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Step 4: Take medications out

- Take the medications out of the locked storage container or area
- Keep all medications for one individual in one storage unit labeled with the individual's name

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Step 5: Verification check

- As you take each medication container from the individual's **storage unit**, read the medication label and compare it to the MAR for the Seven Rights
  - Right person, medication, dose, time, route, reason, and documentation

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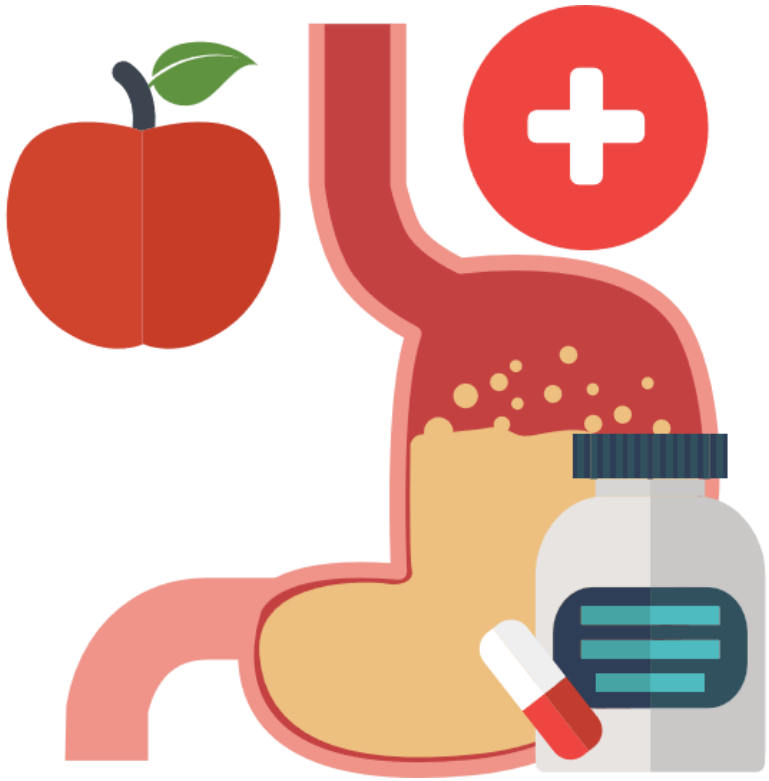
Step 6: Preparation check

- Before pouring the medication, read the medication label and compare it to the MAR for the Seven Rights
  - Right person, medication, dose, time, route, reason, and documentation



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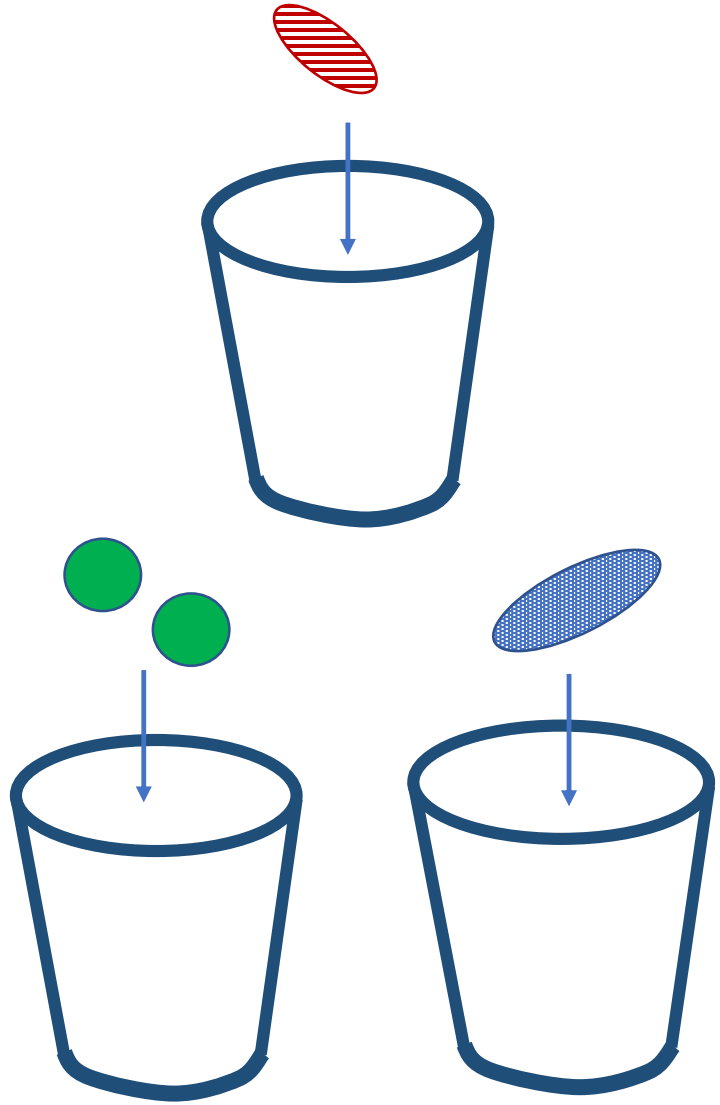
For tablets or capsules

1. Pour the correct dose into the **lid** of the container
2. Then pour into a small paper cup
   - Use a **separate** disposable paper cup for each medication (Pouring all the medications in one paper cup increases the risk of medication errors)



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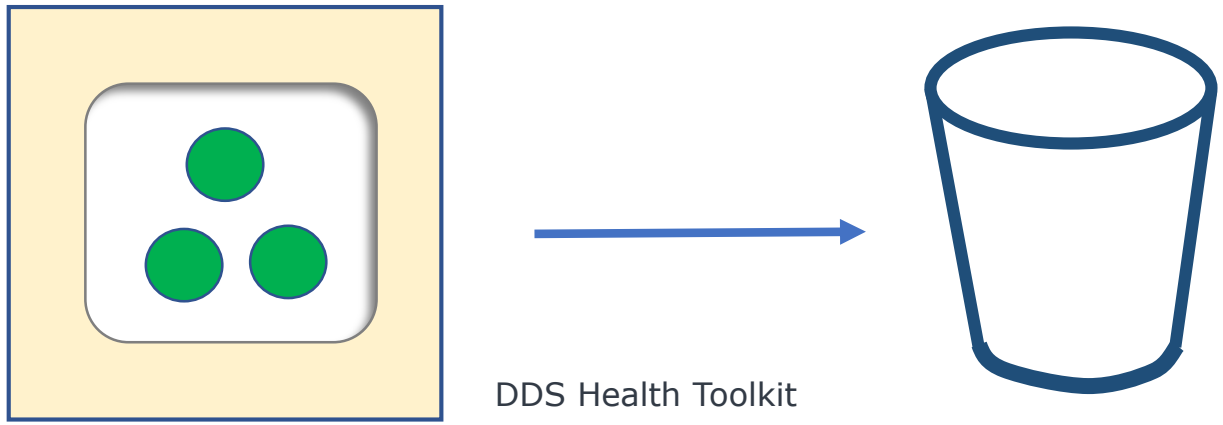
For bubble packs

1. Match tablets/capsules in bubble pack with correct day of the month
2. Slit the slot, remove pills from the pack, and place in cup
3. Finger swipe the inside of the bubble pack to ensure that all medications were removed



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For liquid medications

- Pour the correct dose onto the calibrated measuring cup or spoon, or oral syringe, held at eye level
  - ✓Locate the marking for dosage
  - ✓Fill to the correct dosage level
  - ✓If too much liquid is poured, do **not** pour it back into the bottle - Discard it by pouring into a plastic bag, mixing it with an undesirable substance (coffee grounds or dirt), sealing the bag, and throwing it into the trash

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For liquid medications (cont.)

- ✓Use only a calibrated measuring cup or spoon with measurements clearly marked on the side
- ✓Always check to make sure the unit of measurement on the measuring cup, spoon, or syringe matches the unit of measurement for the dose you want to give

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Step 7: Presentation check

- Before giving the medication to the individual, read the medication label and compare to the MAR for the Seven Rights
- Place the medication within the individual's reach
- Offer a glass of water, at least four ounces
- Make sure that you are familiar with any special instructions for taking medication (food, no food, etc.)

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Step 8: Ensure the individual takes the medication

- Stay with the individual until you are sure that he or she has swallowed the medication
- Make sure the individual drinks water
- If the individual has difficulty drinking water or swallowing liquids, the DSP can ask the doctor about the individual taking the medication with Jell-O, apple sauce, or other alternatives

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Step 9: Record

- Record that the individual took their medication by entering your initials in the box that matches the date and time on the MAR

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Step 10: Return medications

- Return the medication containers to the storage unit
- Read the labels to check that the individual's name is the same as the name on the storage unit
- **NEVER** leave the medication container unattended or give to someone else to return to the locked storage container or area

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Remember…

- If you have ANY doubt as to whether the medication is in the correct form or ANY questions about helping the individual with self-administration, **consult with the prescribing doctor or the pharmacist**