

Common Forms of Medication

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The medical doctor, or licensed healthcare provider is responsible for identifying and prescribing a medication, the dose, and the route of administration. If the provider has ordered a medication to be taken before the patient leaves the office, administering the prescribed drug is one of the most important activities a medical assistant performs on the job. Therefore it is vitally important that the medical assistant knows the most common forms medications available on the market, their types, and uses.

Capsules	Tablets	Powders	Drops
Medication is enclosed in a cylindrical gelatin coating. Ingredients are generally released from capsules faster than from tablets.	Contain medication, binding substances, and disintegrating agents. Some also have added flavoring to make them taste better.	Ultra fine drug particles in a dry form. Depending on the specific medication, they are usually dissolved or mixed in liquids of food and taken immediately after being prepared.	Sterile solution or suspension is administered by a dropper directly into the eye, the outer ear canal, or the nose.
Liquids	Inhalants/Sprays	Skin Preparations	Suppositories
Liquid medications are available as solutions, a drug preparation that is already dissolved; syrups, which are mixed with sugar and water; suspensions, preparations of finely crushed drugs held in liquid; and elixirs, medications dissolved in alcohol and water.	Medication which is breathed or sprayed into the nose or mouth. Some medications are formulated to escape the container in specific fixed doses, but others are allowed to escape the inhaler in random, or non fixed, doses.	Available as ointments, creams, and lotions. Ointments are spreadable, greasy preparations used for local application. Creams ; are not greasy. They are used on the skin only. Lotions are solutions or suspensions used on the skin and are not as sticky as creams and ointments.	Large bullet shaped tablets administered either rectally or vaginally; they are designed to melt at body temperature. Suppositories come in form of rectal (anal), vaginal, and urethral applications. The most common urethral suppositories are known as MUSE®, which stands for "medicated urethral system for erection"
Injectable Solutions Sterile solutions or suspensions supplied in ampules, vials, bags, or bottles.	A metered dose inhaler (MDI) delivers a specific amount of medicine in aerosol form. This makes it possible to inhale the medication, instead of taking it in pill form.		