



# Starting a new medication



# A note to caregivers and/or providers:

- This book will detail the steps of starting a new medication.

This book was written for patients of different ages and language levels. You can determine which language is best to use for your child.

- Not all sections will apply to your child/patient as there are a variety of reasons for starting a new medication. Read this first and choose what information you think will be helpful. It is the responsibility of the provider and caregiver to evaluate the appropriateness of the information in this story.

- Some children benefit from visual supports and rewards to increase motivation and understanding. Please see the customizable visual on the last page of this story. This is one way to present the idea of a prize/reward to your child (e.g., “First medicine, then *[insert prize here]*”).

- If you have more questions about strategies, please contact the Autism Friendly Health System Initiative at [autismfriendly@rchsd.org](mailto:autismfriendly@rchsd.org)

Sincerely,

**The RCHSD Autism Friendly Health System Initiative**



**I saw the doctor today with my [caregiver].**

**We talked about [insert reason for visit].**

**We decided to try a new medication.**

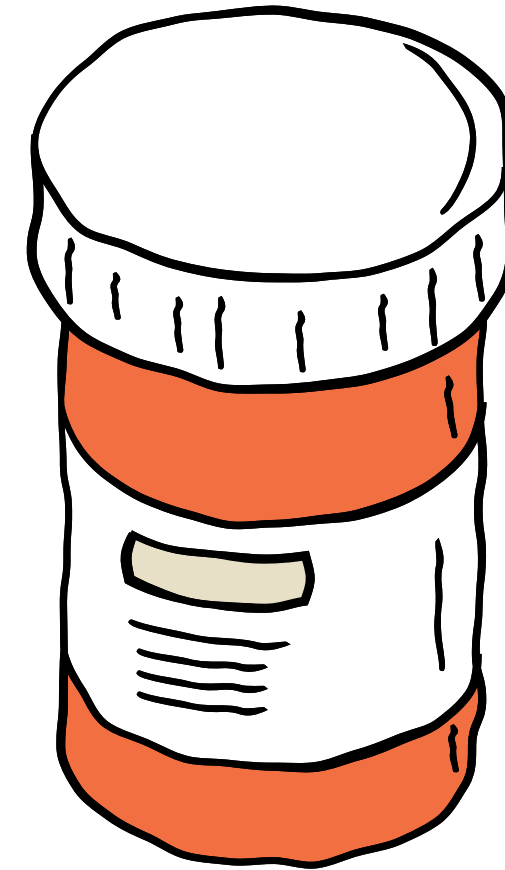
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*Note to caregivers: When describing the reason for the visit/ what has been more challenging for your child, it is also important to highlight things that are going well. For example, "I have been working really hard at soccer practice. Staying on task at school has been harder for me."*



**People take medication for all different reasons.**

**This medication will help me**  
*[insert reason here].*



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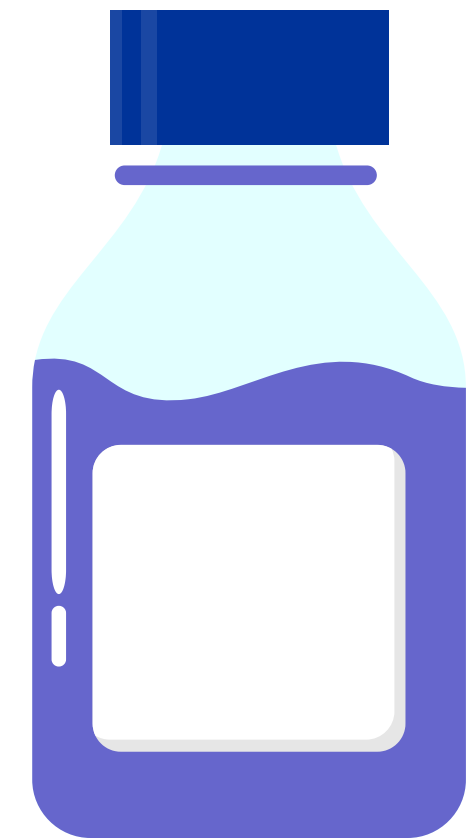
*Note to caregivers: Children start medication for a variety of reasons. Confirm with your provider in order to give your child the most accurate information. It is important to frame the medication in a positive way. For example, “the medication will help me focus/ help me feel better/ help me feel less anxious.”*



**Medication can come in a couple different forms. The medication I am going to take will be *[insert form]*.**

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Note to caregivers: The medication could be liquid, pill, crushed in food, etc. Work with your child's doctor and pharmacist to find a form that will work best for your child.



I will take the medicine every day at [insert time of day].

I can use a check-list, alarm, or calendar to help me remember to take my medicine.

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Sometimes new medicine can make me feel a little different.



If I have a headache, feel sleepy, my stomach hurts, I don't feel hungry or I feel more easily mad/sad, then I will tell my caregiver or my doctor.



We will work together to help me feel better.



**I did a great job learning about my new medicine.**

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*Note to caregivers: Please see the next few pages for possible visual supports to use with your child/teen.*

**all done**

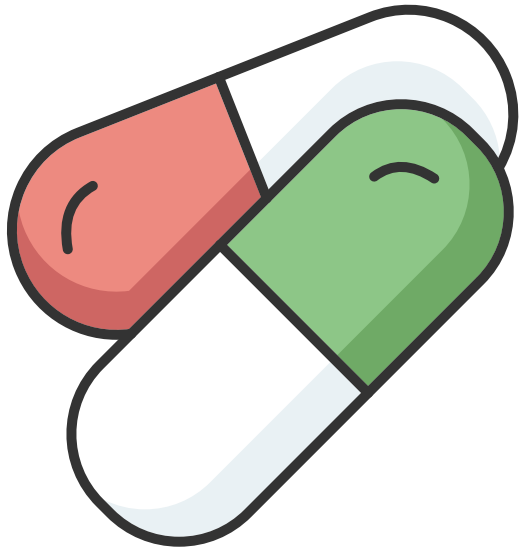



## Caregivers:

Here is a sample “**first-then**” visual if your child is earning a reward after taking their medication. Please use the template on the next page and add your own picture of the reward your child is earning under the word, “**then.**”

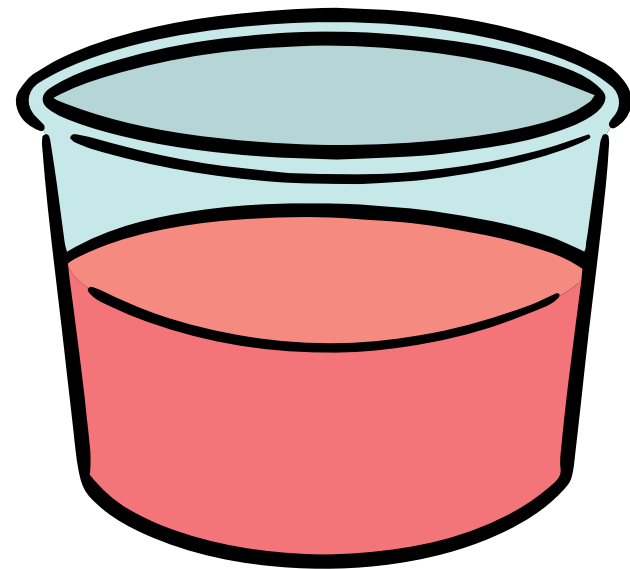
You can present this by saying, “**First medicine, then legos.**”

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FIRST	THEN
	

**FIRST**

**THEN**



**“First medicine, then \_\_\_\_\_.”**



**FIRST**

**THEN**



**“First medicine, then \_\_\_\_\_.”**



## Reward Chart

Another way to present the idea of a prize/reward is with a **reward chart**. This may be effective for a child who does not need a daily reward for medicine, but would benefit from motivation for taking the medication each day.

A reward chart can help the child understand how they will earn their reward.

Please customize with a picture of what your child is motivated to earn on the next page.

**I'm working for**



=



# I'm working for

□ □ □ □ □ □

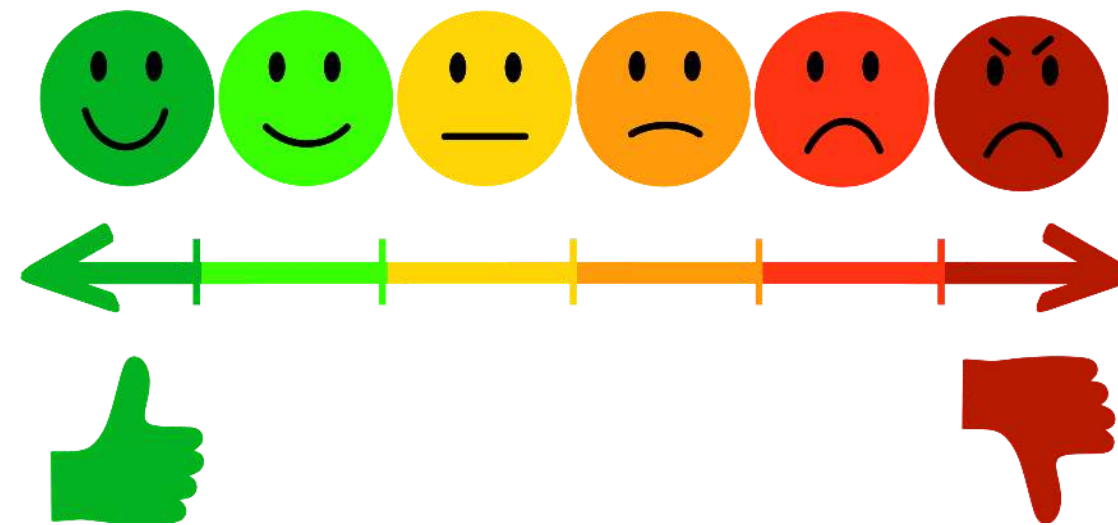
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## Tracking mood symptoms and potential side effects

It could be helpful to track mood changes and potential side effects using visuals.

Please see the following two visuals if you feel like this would benefit your child. When presenting the visuals, it will be important to avoid using leading statements in order to get the most accurate assessment. e.g., try, “circle how you feel today” instead of, “does your head hurt?”



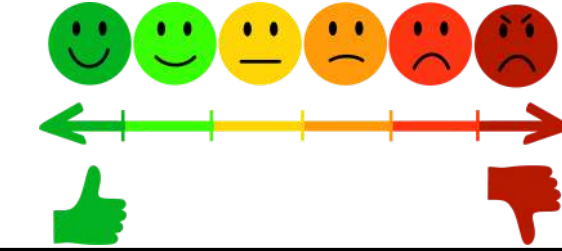
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

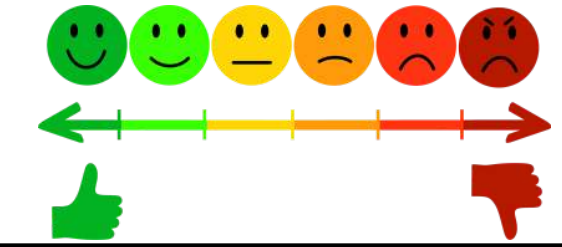
**Monday**



**Tuesday**



**Wednesday**



**Thursday**



**Friday**



**Saturday**



**Sunday**



# Tracking Potential Side Effects

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Monday**



**Tuesday**



**Wednesday**



**Thursday**



**Friday**



**Saturday**



**Sunday**

