Lesson Plan: Types of Medications

Teacher Guide

Topic: Types of medications

Timing: 30–50 minutes

Lesson type/focus: speaking, reading, vocabulary and writing

Aims:

- **Speaking:** discuss types of medications
- **Reading:** read for specific information
- **Vocabulary:** learn and review language for types of medications
- **Writing:** practise organising and presenting information

Overview

The focus of the lesson is describing types of medication. The speaking activity introduces the topic and gives students the opportunity to share their ideas and experience. The reading activity introduces some more related language and practises reading for specific information. The vocabulary activities introduce/review key vocabulary. The writing activity uses language from the lesson and students' own knowledge to produce a piece of patient-centred writing.

Note: This lesson supports the language introduced in the following:

- Course, 'English for Nurses'.
- Unit: 'Administrating Medications'
- Module: 'Types of medication' pages 7, 11 and 14

Teaching notes and answer key

Part 1: speaking

Put students into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss questions 1–3 on the student worksheet. Encourage them to share examples from their own experience.

Do whole class feedback to discuss and share answers.

Suggested answers

1. How many different types of medicines do you know?
oral medication (by mouth), e.g. tablets (pills), capsules, liquids
intravenous medication (in the vein)
nebulisers, inhalers, nasal sprays
eye drops / eye ointments
cream, ointment, patches
laxatives, enemas

2. Why is it important to explain about medications to your patients?
so patients know to take the medication properly
so patients understand possible side effects and precautions

3. What do nurses have to be careful about when they give out medications?
to ensure the correct dose is administered
to ensure the correct medication is given to the correct patient
to ensure they know about any allergies a patient might have and which make taking the medication dangerous
to ensure the medication is given at the correct time

Part 2: reading

Have students work individually to read the text and reorder the sentences to complete the definitions. Then have them compare their ideas with a partner.

Go through the answers as a class.

Have students read the text through again individually and highlight any new words. Deal with any vocabulary queries.

Answers

1. Absorption: medication enters the bloodstream and becomes bioavailable
2. Distribution: medicine passes out of the bloodstream across the cell membrane
3. Metabolism: unwanted medicine becomes water-soluble
4. Excretion: unused medical waste passes out of the body through body fluids

Extension activity
Have students work individually, or in pairs, to write five questions for the text. Then have them swap their questions and answers them. Alternatively, set five comprehension questions yourself.

Example questions:
Which kind of medicines are absorbed the fastest? *intravenous medicines*
Why does the absorption rate of oral medication vary? *amount of stomach acid, food or other medications in stomach*
How does medication get out of the bloodstream? *by passing across the cell membrane*
What does the blood-brain barrier do? *stops medication entering the brain*
What happens to parts of the medication the body doesn't need? *it is excreted by the kidney*

Part 3: vocabulary

A. Have students work individually to write the medications next to the correct number. Then ask students to check their ideas with a partner.

Go through the answers as a class.

Answers
1.capsule 2.mixture 3.tablets 4.lozenges 5.inhaler 6.nebule

B. Have students work individually, or in pairs, to match the terms and meanings.

Go through the answers as a class.

Answers
1.d 2.h 3.g 4.b 5.a 6.f 7.c 8.e

Extension activity
1. Ask students to define these prefixes:
intra- sub- trans-
2. Ask students give examples of medication that is given through these routes. For example,
intranasal – nasal spray for sinusitis
intraocular – medication for macular degeneration
transdermal – patches for pain relief

Part 4: writing

Explain the activity and have students work in pairs or small groups to write a short note with medication guidance about Ibuprofen for patients who are about to be discharged. Students have a medication information box and the beginning of the note they will write to patients or carers as discharge advice.

Stage the task and support students as needed. Make sure they write the note using patient-friendly language, so nothing overly technical.

For lower-level classes, you could provide some language for them to use. For example,
1–2 tablets three times a day
Take… / You should take…
Leave 6 hours between doses
You should leave…. / Make sure that you leave…
Swallow tablets whole with full glass of water or milk
Swallow the tablets… / You should swallow the tablets…
Do not chew, break or crush tablets (could irritate mouth)
Don't chew… / It's essential that you don't…
You must swallow the tablets whole. / It is important to swallow the tablets whole.
Chewing the tablets could irritate your mouth. / Chewing the tablets may cause mouth irritation.
Take after meal or snack (reduce stomach upset)
It's a good idea to take the tablets after a meal…

Taking the tablets after a meal… helps to reduce queasiness / stomach upset.
It's a good idea to eat something before you take…

You could set the activity for homework and have students read each other's notes in the next class. Alternatively, allow enough time in this lesson for writing and sharing their work.

Suggested answer
Dear Patient / Carer,
You have been prescribed Ibuprofen 200mg for back pain.
Take the medication three times a day. Make sure that you leave six hours between doses.
Take the tablets with a full glass of water or milk. You must swallow the tablets whole. Do not chew, crush or break the tablets as this could irritate your mouth.
It's a good idea to take the tablets after a meal or snack. This helps reduce stomach upset.

Student Worksheet: Types of Medications

Part 1: speaking

Discuss questions 1–3 with your partner or group.

1. How many different types of medicines do you know? Think about the way they are given.
2. Why is it important to explain about medications to your patients?
3. What do nurses have to be careful about when they give out medications?

Part 2: reading

Read the text about how medications work. Then put the words in the correct order to make definitions of the words in bold (1–4).

How do Medications Work?

Firstly, medication needs to be absorbed into the body to be able to work. This is called bioavailability. Medicines are best absorbed through the bloodstream, but the speed at which they start to work depends on the route of administration.

Medicines which are administered intravenously work almost immediately, because they are completely bioavailable. Intramuscular injections are absorbed a little slower, and subcutaneous injections are the slowest to be absorbed.

Other routes of administration include rectal administration, e.g. as a suppository or enema. The absorption rate of rectal medication varies, as does the absorption rate of oral medication. Medication which is taken in by mouth, e.g. tablets, capsules or liquid mixtures, have different rates of absorption. This depends on factors such as the amount of stomach acid and the presence of food or other medicines. Of the different types of oral medication, liquid medication is absorbed the fastest, then capsules and finally tablets, which are the slowest to become bioavailable.

After absorption, the drug is distributed to various parts of the body. Medicine passes out of the bloodstream across the cell membrane to become available to the body. However, a special barrier called the *blood-brain barrier* stops drugs from moving from the blood into the brain.

Then the medicine is metabolised or broken down, so that it is more water-soluble. This enables any part of the medication which is not needed to be excreted by the kidney. Excretion is mainly through the urine, although some drugs are excreted in the faeces, in the air that we exhale or in breast milk.

1. becomes / and / bioavailable / and / medication / the / enters / bloodstream
Absorption: _____

2. the cell / membrane / across / of the / bloodstream / medicine / passes out
Distribution: _____

3. becomes / unwanted / water-soluble / medicine
Metabolism: _____

4. body fluids / unused / medical waste / passes out / through / of the body
Excretion: _____

Part 3: vocabulary

A. Match the medication to the correct picture (1–6). Write the words under the picture.

capsule	inhaler	lozenge	mixture	nebule	tablet

1

1. _____

2

2. _____

3

3. _____

4

4. _____

5. _____ 6. _____

B. Match the medical terms for routes of administration 1–8 with the meanings a–h.

1. intra-aural	a) under the skin
2. intraocular	b) into the muscle
3. intravenous	c) under the tongue
4. intramuscular	d) into the ear
5. subcutaneous	e) into the nose
6. transdermal	f) across the skin
7. sublingual	g) into the vein
8. intranasal	h) into the eyeball

Part 4: writing

You are going to work with a partner to write a short note with medication guidance about Ibuprofen for patients who are about to be discharged. Ibuprofen is a simple painkiller (a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug) which is used for a range of aches and pains.
Use the information in the box to explain:

- how many tablets to take
- when to take the tablets
- special precautions

Ibuprofen 200mg
1–2 tablets three times a day
Leave 6 hours between doses
Swallow tablets whole with full glass of water or milk
Do not chew, break or crush tablets (could irritate mouth)
Take after meal or snack (reduce stomach upset)

You can start your note like this:

Dear Patient / Carer,

You have been prescribed Ibuprofen 200mg for back pain.