

WHO creates data base on use of child medicines

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(AP) -- The World Health Organization on Friday issued its first-ever guidance on how to use more than 240 essential medicines for children under 13.

The data provide information on use, dosage and side effects of medicines as well as warnings about which children should not take them, the U.N. health agency said. The 528-page document also tells users about common drug interactions.

"To be effective, medicines must be carefully chosen and the dose adjusted to suit the age, weight and needs of children," said WHO's Dr Hans Hogerzeil.

"Without a global guide, many [health care professionals](#) have had to prescribe medicines based on very limited evidence," he said in a statement.

Some countries have developed their own instructions for giving medicines to children, but there are no universal standards.

The WHO document only exists in English. But the agency recommends that governments use it as a model and translate it into their national language, spokeswoman Fadela Chaib said.

Around 8.8 million children under 5 die every year, many from diseases such as [diarrhea](#) and [pneumonia](#) that could be avoided with the correct

use of medicines, according to WHO.

More information: <http://bit.ly/a9ttEd>

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