Common Dosage Forms of Medications

**Tablet**
- Hard, compressed medication in round, oval, or square shape
- Some have enteric coating or other types of coatings, which delay release of the drug and cannot be crushed or chewed

**Capsule**
- In a gelatin container that may be hard or soft
- Dissolves quickly in stomach

**Liquid** – different types of liquid medications
- Solution – a liquid containing dissolved medication
- Suspension – a liquid holding undissolved particles of medication that must be shaken before measuring and administering to resident
- Syrup – a liquid medication dissolved in a sugar water to disguise its taste
- Elixir – a sweet alcohol based solution in which medications are dissolved

**Suppository**
- Small solid medicated substance, usually cone-shaped
- Melts at body temperature
- May be administered by rectum or vagina
- Refrigerate as directed by manufacturer

**Inhalant**
- Medication carried into the respiratory tract using air, oxygen or steam
- Inhalants may be used orally or nasally

**Topical** – applied directly to the skin surface. Topical medications include the following:
- Ointment – a semisolid substance for application of medication to the skin or eye
- Lotion – a medication dissolved in liquid for applying to the skin
- Paste – a semisolid substance thicker and stiffer than an ointment containing medications
- Cream – semisolid preparation holding medication so it can be applied to skin
- Shampoo – liquid containing medication that is applied to the scalp and hair
- Patches (transdermal) – medication encased in a round, square, or oval disc that is affixed to the skin
- Powder – fine, ground form of medication that may be used to be swallowed, or may be used on the skin for rashes
- Aerosol sprays – solution that holds the medication suspended until it is dispensed in the form of a mist to spray on the skin