

How to Measure the Volume of Liquids



You have a cold.

The fast-acting cold medicine you need to take comes in liquid form. You pull out the bottle and read the instructions on the back to find the correct dosage: 20 mL.

But the dosing cup is gone. How can you be sure you're getting the right amount?

By understanding a certain form of measurement:

volume.

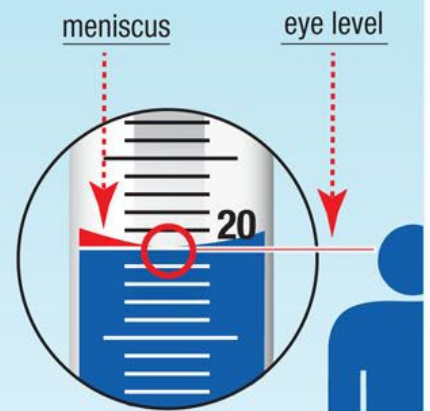
Volume is the amount of space occupied by a substance. The liter is the basic unit of volume in the metric system.



Scientists measure the volume of liquids using a **graduated cylinder**, a plastic or glass tube marked with lines (usually by milliliters) indicating the amount of liquid contained within it.

In order to get an accurate reading when measuring volume, place the graduated cylinder on a flat surface.

Place on flat surface →



Examine the liquid at eye level. You'll see the force of attraction between the water and the glass causes the surface of the liquid to curve down. This curve is called the **meniscus**.

Read the numbered mark aligned with or below the lowest point of the curve.

That number, plus the unit of measure (usually milliliters), is the liquid's volume.