



Medicines and Dehydration

Patient Information

This leaflet is about what actions to take if you develop an illness that causes dehydration. These actions are called 'medicine sick day rules'.



What is the potential problem?

Taking certain medicines when you are dehydrated can result in you developing a more serious illness. The 'Medicine Sick Day Rules' card lists medicines that should be temporarily stopped during a dehydrating illness.

ACE inhibitors:

a medicine for high blood pressure and heart conditions.

If you are dehydrated, these medicines can stop your kidneys working properly.

Examples: names ending in 'pril' such as lisinopril, perindopril, ramipril

ARBs:

a medicine for high blood pressure and heart conditions.

If you are dehydrated, these medicines can stop your kidneys working properly.

Examples: names ending in 'sartan' such as losartan, candesartan, valsartan

Diuretics:

sometimes called 'water pills' for excess fluid and high blood pressure.

These medicines can make dehydration more likely.

Examples: furosemide, bendroflumethiazide, indapamide, spironolactone

Metformin:

a medicine for diabetes.

Dehydration can make it more likely that you will develop a serious side effect called lactic acidosis.

NSAIDs:

anti-inflammatory pain killers.

If you are dehydrated, these medicines can stop your kidneys working properly.

Examples: ibuprofen, naproxen, diclofenac

Your pharmacist, doctor or nurse can tick your medicines from this list on the 'Medicine Sick Day Rules' card.

Other medicine you take may also result in a more serious illness when you are dehydrated. Your health professional will discuss these with you and write them on the card.

Which illnesses cause dehydration?

Dehydration is the loss of fluid from your body. Vomiting, diarrhoea and fever (high temperature, sweats, shaking) can make you dehydrated.

If you are sick once or have diarrhoea once, then you are unlikely to become dehydrated. Having two or more episodes of vomiting or diarrhoea can lead to dehydration: in these cases, you should follow the advice in this leaflet.

What actions should I take?

If you develop a dehydrating illness, you should temporarily stop taking any medicine listed in this leaflet and any other medicine identified by your health professional. It is very important that you restart your medicine once you have recovered from the illness. This would normally be after 24 to 48 hours of eating and drinking normally. When you restart your medicine, just take them as normal. Do not take extra for the doses you have missed.



What does the card look like?

The card is credit-card sized and printed on both sides:

NHS
SCOTLAND

Medicine Sick Day Rules

When you are unwell with any of the following:

- Vomiting or diarrhoea (unless only minor)
- Fevers, sweats and shaking (unless only minor)

Then STOP taking the medicines ticked on the other side of this card by your healthcare professional

Restart when you are well (after 24-48 hours of eating and drinking normally)

If you are in any doubt, contact your pharmacist, doctor or nurse

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NHS 24 SCOTLAND PATIENT SAFETY PROGRAMME

Medicines to stop on sick days

- ACE inhibitors:** medicine names ending in "pril"
- ARBs:** medicine names ending in "sartan"
- Diuretics:** eg, furosemide, bendroflumethiazide
- Metformin:** a medicine for diabetes
- NSAIDs:** eg, ibuprofen, diclofenac, naproxen

Other medicines to stop taking

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

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Need more information?

Please contact your pharmacist, doctor or nurse.