



Medication sick day guidance

Patient and carer information

This leaflet is about what actions to take if you develop an illness that causes dehydration.

What is the potential problem?

Taking certain medicines when you are dehydrated can result in you developing a more serious illness. The 'Medication Sick Day Guidance' card lists specific medicines that should be temporarily withheld during a dehydrating illness. There may be exceptions but your healthcare professional can advise.



What is the potential problem? continued



SGLT-2 inhibitors: a medicine for diabetes and chronic heart failure

If you are dehydrated, it can make it more likely you will develop a serious side effect called diabetic ketoacidosis.

Examples: names ending in “flozin” e.g. empagliflozin, canagliflozin, dapagliflozin

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’ e.g. lisinopril, perindopril, ramipril

Diuretics: sometimes called ‘water pills’ for excess fluid and high blood pressure

These medicines can worsen dehydration.

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.

Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (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’ e.g. losartan, candesartan, valsartan

NSAIDs: anti-inflammatory pain killers

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

Examples: ibuprofen, naproxen, diclofenac

What is the potential problem? continued



Your pharmacist, doctor or nurse can record your medicines from this list on the 'Medication Sick Day Guidance' card, or on the Manage Medicines app or [website](#).

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 include them in your list.

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 have two or more episodes of vomiting or diarrhoea, it can lead to dehydration. In these cases, you should follow the advice in this leaflet.

What actions should I take if I have two or more episodes of vomiting or diarrhoea?

You should temporarily stop taking any medicine previously agreed with your healthcare professional. If you taking medicines identified on this leaflet and are not clear if you should use this guidance, please discuss this with a healthcare professional.

You should 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.

Additional information for those taking SGLT-2 inhibitors:

- They should also be taken with caution in those who have limited oral intake, due to the risk of euglycaemic diabetic ketoacidosis (eDKA).
- eDKA may occur if you have surgery planned, and the usual advice is to stop before surgery and for three days after. However your consultant/surgeon/their team will advise you.

Download the Manage Meds toolkit on the Right Decision Service app



App



Website

What does the card look like?



The card is postcard sized and printed on both sides (shown below, not actual size).

For more information, please contact your healthcare professional.



Medication Sick Day Guidance

When you are unwell with:

- two or more episodes of vomiting or diarrhoea
- fever, sweats or shaking (unless mild)

You should temporarily stop taking the medicines ticked overleaf as previously agreed with your healthcare professional.

Restart your medicines once you are well, usually after 24–48 hours of eating and drinking normally.



EFFECTIVE PRESCRIBING
& THERAPEUTICS DIVISION



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



Medicines to stop on sick days

(as agreed with your healthcare professional):

- ☐ SGLT-2 inhibitors, ending “flozin”
- ☐ ACE inhibitors, ending “pril”
- ☐ Diuretics, e.g. bendroflumethiazide, furosemide
- ☐ Metformin
- ☐ ARB, ending “sartan”
- ☐ NSAIDs, e.g. ibuprofen, diclofenac, naproxen

Other medicines to stop:

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

Version 4 (2026) produced by Effective Prescribing and Therapeutics Division,
Scottish Government and Healthcare Improvement Scotland.



Version 4 (2026) produced by Effective Prescribing and Therapeutics Division, Scottish Government and Healthcare Improvement Scotland.