

## Top tips to keep you safe with

- Make sure medicine are stored safely away from children and pets.
- Always take your medicines as prescribed - do not double up on missed doses, do not change the dose.
- For advice on remembering to take your medicines
- Only take medicines prescribed for yourself and don't share your medicines with others.
- If you are buying any medicines, or taking any herbals or street drugs, make sure you are sure they are safe - check with your community pharmacist or prescriber first.
- Make sure you know how to safely start your medicines - ask your prescriber if there is an increasing dose
- Don't stop medicines abruptly - it can lead to withdrawal symptoms or a worsening of your condition. If you want to stop taking your medicines discuss with your prescriber.
- For advice on keeping well in hot weather.
- Don't keep unwanted medicines at home. These can be taken to your usual community pharmacy for safe destruction.
- If you buy medicines online then further information about risks and how to keep safe can be found at Buying Medicines Over the Internet
- **If you unsure about anything just ask your prescriber, pharmacist or nurse.**

## Contact us



**Derbyshire Healthcare NHS  
Foundation Trust Kingsway  
Hospital, Derby DE22 3LZ**



**123456**

**If you would like this  
information in a different  
language or format, including  
Easy Read or BSL, contact  
dhcft.communications@nhs.net**

Ak by ste chceli tieto  
informácie v inom jazyku  
alebo vo formáte, kontaktujte  
spoločnosť  
dhcft.communications@nhs.net

Pokud budete chtít tyto  
informace v jiném jazyce nebo  
ve formátu, kontaktujte  
dhcft.communications@nhs.net

如果您希望以另一种语言或另一  
种格式接收此信息，请联系  
dhcft.communications@nhs.net

Si vous souhaitez recevoir ces  
informations en une autre  
langue ou un autre format,  
veuillez contacter  
dhcft.communications@nhs.net

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo  
otrzymać kopię niniejszych  
informacji w innej wersji  
językowej lub w alternatywnym  
formacie, prosimy o kontakt z  
dhcft.communications@nhs.net

Heke hûn dixwazin ev  
agahdariyê di zimanek cuda an  
formatê bixwazin kerema xwe  
ji re têkilî bikin  
dhcft.communications@nhs.net

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ  
ਜਾਂ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ  
ਕਰਕੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ  
dhcft.communications@nhs.net

یہ سکتا ہے کہ تم کو دلچسپ ہے کہ  
روایہ سکتا ہے کہ ای ان اب زی رس دو  
ان رک ل ص ا ح ی م ٹ ی م راف  
م رک ہ ا ر ب و ت ی ہ س ت ہ ا ج  
ی ی رک ہ ط ب ا ر  
dhcft.communications@nhs.net

**WE MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE  
IN EVERYTHING WE DO**



**Derbyshire Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Risky alone, toxic together



Information for  
patients/carers to help keep  
them safe with medicines

## Overview

Medicines are important and useful for treating and preventing a wide range of physical and mental illnesses. When taken as recommended then they can be useful and safe and should not be stopped abruptly. Discuss any concerns with your healthcare professionals.

However it is recognised that certain combinations of medicines can be more risky than others, especially when taken outside of recommended dosing from a prescriber or pharmacy i.e. an overdose. Overdoses can be both intentional as self-harm or unintentional/accidental. Unintentional overdoses occur for many reasons such as not understanding what you are taking, not realising the combination is dangerous especially when using someone else's medicines or those brought in a shop/community pharmacy.

This leaflet has been developed by Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to support patients and carers to keep themselves safe when taking medicines.

## Specific Medicines

Some medicines are considered to be more risky when taken not as recommended especially when taken as an overdose, or when used in combination due to additive effects.

## Benzodiazepines

These include diazepam, lorazepam and temazepam.

These drugs are used to help with anxiety and sleep disorders.

Benzodiazepines should only be used for short-periods. Use for longer periods can lead to the medicine not working as well and difficulty stopping.

Large doses of benzodiazepines, especially when in combination with opioids and/or alcohol, are particularly dangerous and can slow your breathing rate. They can be fatal in overdoses.

## Antidepressants

This is a large group of medicines and includes SSRIs (i.e. sertraline, citalopram, fluoxetine), mirtazapine, venlafaxine, tricyclic's (i.e. imipramine, clomipramine, amitriptyline) and others.

Antidepressants are used to treat depression and low mood, anxiety and pain.

Some antidepressants can be damaging to the heart. Those medicines where the risk is higher and for patients with existing heart problems, the prescriber will make sure extra checks are done before starting and during to keep you safe. However when taken in large doses the effect on the heart can be very serious.

## Gabapentinoids (Pregabalin and gabapentin)

Pregabalin is used to treat anxiety, pain and epilepsy. Gabapentin is used for pain and epilepsy.

Pregabalin at higher doses, especially when in combination with alcohol and/or opioids, it can slow your breathing rate. It can be fatal in overdoses.

## Opioids

These include morphine, oxycodone, fentanyl and codeine. They also include methadone and buprenorphine and illicit's such as heroin.

Opioids are used to treat pain but also in substance misuse.

Large doses, especially in combination with alcohol and/or benzodiazepines, can make you very sleepy and slow your breathing rate. They can be fatal in overdoses.

For more information about individual mental health medicines visit

<https://www.choiceandmedication.org/derbyshcft>