

## Protecting Your Family: Why Medication Safety Matters (Website)

Every year, thousands of people — both adults and children — are harmed or killed by taking medication that wasn't prescribed to them. Whether by accident, curiosity, or misunderstanding, taking someone else's medicine can be deadly. It's a growing problem in homes across the country, and it's one we all have the power to prevent.

### The Risks of Taking Someone Else's Medication

Prescription medications are carefully tailored to an individual's health needs, age, weight, and medical history. What works for one person may be dangerous — even fatal — for another.

Taking someone else's medicine can cause:

- Severe allergic reactions
- Dangerous interactions with other medications
- Overdose and poisoning
- Organ failure
- Death

This isn't just a concern for children. Adults are increasingly affected, often misusing medications for pain, anxiety, or sleep without understanding the consequences.

### Keep Medications Safe & Secure

Help prevent accidents and misuse by following these safety tips:

- Store medications out of reach and out of sight, ideally in a locked cabinet or box.
- Never leave tablets or medicines loose in purses, drawers, or countertops.
- Keep medication in original packaging with clear labels and instructions.
- Dispose of unused or expired medication safely — many pharmacies offer free disposal services.
- Talk openly with your family — especially teens and elderly relatives — about the dangers of sharing or taking medication that isn't theirs.

### What To Do If Someone Takes the Wrong Medication

If you suspect that someone has taken medication not prescribed to them:

1. Stay calm but act quickly.
2. Call 999 for an ambulance or go to your nearest A&E department if the person is unconscious, having trouble breathing, or acting erratically.
3. Contact NHS 111 or visit [www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk) for guidance if the person is conscious and stable.
4. Give all available details — the medication taken, how much, and when.

Don't wait for symptoms to show — some effects can be delayed but still dangerous.

### Pharmacies

Your local pharmacist can help with safe medication storage, disposal, and advice.

### Medication Safety Starts With You

You can save a life just by locking the medicine cabinet, talking to your children, or helping a friend get support.

The message is simple:

**If it's not prescribed for you, don't take it. Ever.**

Stay safe. Stay informed. Share the message.