

# MEDICINES AND DEHYDRATION

## Patient Information

### Need more Information?

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Please contact your pharmacist, doctor, or nurse



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

## Who is this leaflet for?

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You have been given this leaflet as you are taking the following long term medicine(s). Your pharmacist, doctor or nurse can circle your medicine(s) on this list or on the right hand side of your repeat prescription

- **ACE inhibitors: a medicine for high blood pressure and heart conditions.**  
Examples: names ending in “pril” such as lisinopril, perindopril, ramipril
- **ARBs: a medicine for high blood pressure and heart conditions**  
Examples: names ending in “sartan” such as losartan, candesartan, valsartan
- **NSAIDs: anti-inflammatory pain killers**  
Examples: ibuprofen, naproxen, diclofenac
- **Diuretics: sometimes called “water tablets” for excess fluid and high blood pressure**  
Examples: furosemide, bendroflumethiazide, indapamide, spironolactone
- **Metformin: a medicine for Diabetes**

## Which illnesses cause dehydration?

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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 on this leaflet

## What is the problem?

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Taking certain medicines when you are dehydrated can result in you developing a more serious illness. These are:

- **ACE inhibitors, ARBs and NSAIDs:** if you are dehydrated, these medicines can stop your kidneys working properly
- **Diuretics:** these medicines can make dehydration more likely
- **Metformin:** dehydration can make it more likely that you will develop a serious side effect called lactic acidosis

## What action should I take?

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If you develop a dehydrating illness, you should **temporarily** stop taking the medicines listed on this leaflet. It is very important that you re-start your medicine(s) once you have recovered from the illness. This would normally be after 24-48 hours of eating and drinking normally. When you re-start your medicines, just take them as normal: do not take extra for the doses you have missed. If you have not recovered within five to seven days seek further advice from your health care professional.

If you take any medicines which require regular blood level monitoring (e.g. Lithium) you should contact the health care professional who is responsible for this medicine for further advice.