

2. What is a side effect?

Medicines are designed to help you but sometimes they can cause problems. For example, a medicine to stop a bad pain might make you feel sick or cause a headache. These unwanted problems are called side effects. You may also hear them called 'adverse drug reactions'. Side effects can range from being common to very rare. They can also range from mild to severe. So, if you think you're having a side effect from your medicine, it's really important that you tell others how you're feeling.

6. Apart from my doctors and nurses, who else watches out for side effects?

The Medicines and Health Care products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) watches out for side effects. Anyone can report a side effect to the MHRA either by going to their website <http://www.mhra.gov.uk/> or phoning them free on 0800 100 3352. If you decide to report your side effect to the MHRA you might want to ask your parent for help.

7. Where can I find out more information?

For more information about side effects, please see the information leaflet that came with your medicine. If you did not get a leaflet, please ask a doctor or nurse for one, or visit the website <http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk/>

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NHS

Talking about

side effects from medicines

Information leaflet for children and young people aged 9 and over

Alder Hey Children's

NHS

Foundation Trust

1. Who is this leaflet for?

If you think you might have had a side effect from a medicine, this leaflet is for you. Sometimes children and young people are worried about side effects but they aren't sure what to do next, or don't know what questions to ask. This leaflet gives some information about side effects, but its main purpose is to help you in talking with a doctor or nurse about any concerns you may have about side effects.

3. Can I be sure if my medicine has caused a side effect?

Often it is impossible to be sure if a medicine is really causing a side effect so it may be best to seek advice from a doctor or nurse. Many common problems (like stomach upsets or headaches) may actually have nothing to do with medicines. For example, a person might be taking a medicine for a long time and then catch an upset stomach infection (e.g. the 'winter vomiting bug'). In this case it is most likely that the infection - not the medicine - is causing the upset stomach.

4. What should I do about my medicine if I have had a side effect?

Most medicines come with a leaflet describing the medicine, how to take it and possible side effects. It is important that you read this leaflet. If you think that you have a side effect it's important to speak to your mum or dad or another responsible adult. They might want to discuss with a doctor or nurse about what to do next. There may be different options to consider. For example, if the side effect is mild and your medicine is helping you, it might be best to keep taking the medicine. If the side effect is severe, your doctor may talk to you about taking a smaller dose (amount) of medicine, using a different medicine or stopping your medicine.

5. What questions can I ask my doctor or nurse?

You can ask anything you like! Just in case you can't think of any questions, we've written some below that you might want to ask

Can I take my medicine again?

If I take my medicine again, will I have the same side effect?

How long will the side effect last?

Will there be more side effects?

Can I have a different medicine that doesn't give me side effects?

What will happen if I don't take my medicine?