

Storing medicines at home

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Aim of the patient information

This patient information is a general guide for patients on how to safely store medicines at home. Please follow the specific storage advice found within individual drugs' patient information leaflet or speak to your local pharmacist if you are unsure.

Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Keep medicines in their original packaging and use pill boxes with caution.
- Check expiry dates – expired medicines can be dangerous.
- Ensure medicines are stored correctly as indicated on the packaging or label.
- Some medicines need to be refrigerated, kept out of light, or in specific containers.
- Room temperature medicines should be in regulated rooms and not exposed to temperature fluctuations, like conservatories on hot or cold days.
- Follow prescribing directions.
- Store in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight, heat and moisture.
- Keep medicine in a childproof place and out of reach of children and pets.

Don'ts

- Avoid storage near sources of heat or humidity like kitchens, bathrooms, sinks or radiators.
- Never remove from their original packets or containers.
- Do not take medication that has not been prescribed to you.
- Do not use damaged medicine:
Medication that has changed colour, texture, smell, or size even if it hasn't expired.
Pills, tablets or capsules that stick together, are cracked or chipped, or feel harder or softer than usual.

Refrigerated storage advice

Leaving refrigerated medication out at room temperature can have significant consequences, impacting its effectiveness and in some cases, its safety. The primary reason certain medications require refrigeration is to maintain their stability

and potency. Medicines which need to be stored in the fridge will be clearly marked as needing refrigeration. They can include creams, ointments, eye drops and injections.

These medicines require storage in a refrigerator, with a temperature range of between 2°C and 8°C and should be checked regularly.

- Keep medicines away from the back and sides of the fridge walls to avoid freezing, preferably on the middle shelf.
- Keep medicines away from water drips and possible food contamination, ideally in a clean, dry plastic container.
- Store medicines away from the fridge's internal light.

In the event of a power cut or fridge breakdown, please contact your local pharmacy or the manufacturer of your medication for further information on what to do.

(Manufacturer contact details can be found in the patient information leaflet with your medication).

If someone does take your medicine by accident, call NHS Direct, a doctor or the Patient Services Team immediately for advice.

Medicines for Children

- Never call medicines “candy”, “sweet” or “juice” in front of children.
- Always give medicines to young children yourself instead of letting them take it.

How to safely dispose of medicines

If you think the medicine's package, container or the tablet storage box has been damaged, or if the medicine looks, smells, or feels different to how it normally appears - then the next step is to return them to pharmacy.

To get rid of damaged, expired, or old medicines, place them in a clear plastic bag, seal it and take them back to your local pharmacy, where staff can safely dispose of it. Do not throw medicines into household waste or flush them down the toilet, as this can be harmful for our water systems and wildlife.

If you have any feedback regarding this guide, please contact the local pharmacy department using the details below.

Contact details

Pharmacy department

Lincoln

Phone 01522 573388 or 582807

Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm

Saturday and Sunday 9:15am to 12:30pm

Boston

Phone 01205 445601

Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm

Saturday and Sunday 9:00am to 12:30pm

Grantham

Phone 01476 464276

Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm

Saturday 9:00am to 12:30pm

Sunday closed

If you need immediate medical advice but it is not serious or life threatening call NHS 111 for advice.

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www.accessable.co.uk/united-lincolnshire-hospitals-nhs-trust

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If you require this information in another language or alternative format, please email the Patient Information team at ulth.patient.information@nhs.net