



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Keep methadone and
other medications away
from children

Lock medicines/drugs away
where children cannot see or
reach them

If your child swallows methadone, other medication, drugs or alcohol they could be seriously harmed or die. As little as a teaspoon of methadone could kill a young child.

Over half the cases of poisoning in children are caused by them swallowing medication/drugs.

Young children are naturally curious and do not understand danger. You can't expect children to understand the difference between a brightly coloured pill and a sweet, or between methadone and fizzy pop.

When the pharmacist puts your medication – whether capsules, tablets or liquid – into a bottle, it will be supplied with a child resistant lid.

These lids make it hard for children to open but they are NOT 100% childproof.

It is therefore **essential** to keep medicines locked away where children cannot reach them.

DO NOT put tablets and/or methadone in bottles without child-resistant lids.

DO NOT keep methadone, tablets, drugs or alcohol where children can get hold of them.

If you buy methadone and tablets off the street **remember:**

- You cannot be sure of the strength or the purity
- They may not be in bottles with child-resistant lids
- If a child does swallow them you may not be able to tell the doctor exactly what they have taken.
- Make sure you store it **SAFELY**

Emergency action

If you think a child has swallowed your medication

- Phone for an ambulance to get the child to the nearest accident and emergency unit as soon as possible
- Take the container of the medication (and any remaining contents) with you so the doctor knows what the child has taken
- Do not try and make the child sick – this may make things worse
- If the child is unconscious lie them on their side to make their breathing easier and to prevent them inhaling vomit if they are sick

Safety checklist

- **Do** lock all medicines / drugs away from children
- **Do** teach children not to swallow anything unfamiliar
- **Do** take old and unwanted medicines to the pharmacy to be disposed of
- **Do** store and dispose of all sharps and injecting equipment safely
- **DO NOT** keep methadone in the fridge
- **DO NOT** store unused methadone/medication
- **Do** ask your local drug treatment service about safe storage boxes for methadone.

Based on a leaflet by Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board.

Author: J Pendennis - Maternity Unit, May 2011

Reviewed December 2015, May 2018 (L Perkins, Consultant MW)

Approved: Maternity Information Group, June 2018

Review due: June 2020