

## Problems with Sharing Medication

Sharing medications is usually done with the best intentions.

It is understandable at the present time why people would want to share medicines with neighbours and friends especially when so many people are self-isolating and unable to get their own medicines.

As a result of the high demand for over the counter medicines recently, many have been temporarily out of stock. It may be tempting to share over the counter and prescription medications with friends or family members but most people don't realize how quickly things can go wrong.

- You may not be treating the right problem

In fact in some cases the symptoms may not require medicine at all. Or the symptoms may be similar to someone else's but the cause may be completely different which could mean the medicine won't work or could cause more harm than good.

- The dose may be incorrect

The correct dosage is a critical to ensuring that medications are both safe and effective. If a medication is shared, you may be starting at a higher dose than is actually needed, increasing risk factors and side effects.

It is worth remembering that even medications like topical ointments and creams can cause problems if used in the wrong way and by the wrong person.

- Sharing antibiotics is bad for everyone

The use of antibiotics when they are not needed is a problem for individuals but also for society as a whole. Overuse leads to resistance and this will mean that we could run out of effective treatments for common infections. Ultimately this will mean that many of the treatments we know today cannot be used and that would mean cancer treatments and hip replacements would be to risky to undertake.

- Pain medication should always be managed carefully

Pain medications can be the most dangerous medicines to share. Many can increase blood pressure and some may cause renal failure and heart failure as well as stomach ulcers. So if you have a pre existing condition using pain killers can lead to serious problems.

**The best approach is to check with your doctor or pharmacist if you have an illness before taking any medication, and to never share prescription medications with your friends and family.**