

# Medicines and side effects

Side effects or adverse reactions are unwanted effects of medicines.

All medicines have possible side effects but not everyone gets them, and they often go away with time.



## Medicine side effects

Side effects are more likely to happen:

- when you start taking a medicine
- if you're taking a high dose
- if the medicine interacts with other medicines you're taking
- if you're an older person.

Some side effects develop after you've been taking the medicine for a while or if you suddenly stop taking it.

### What can I do to prevent or reduce side effects?

Ask your healthcare provider for advice before you start or stop any medicines, and follow the instructions on the label.

If a side effect bothers you, your healthcare provider may advise you to reduce your dose or try another treatment.



### How common are medicine side effects?

They range from being very common (more than 1 person in 10) to very rare (fewer than 1 in 10,000 people).

It's helpful to know how common a side effect is, but it can't tell you how likely it is that you'll have it. You may not get any side effects at all.



**Note:** Some medicines may be affected by food, alcohol, other medicines, herbal supplements or rongoā Māori, which may make side effects worse.

### Reporting side effects

Side effects can be reported to the Centre for Adverse Reactions Monitoring (CARM):

Call: (03) 479 7185

Email: [carmnz@stonebow.otago.ac.nz](mailto:carmnz@stonebow.otago.ac.nz)

<https://pophealth.my.site.com/carmreportnz/s/>

