

Advice for Parents & Caregivers

Quick Reference Guide



Before you read anything else

This guide is for moments when something doesn't feel right and you need clear, calm steps. You do not need to be certain. Acting early is safer than waiting.

Common warning signs

Mental or behaviour changes such as confusion, panic, extreme agitation, unusual withdrawal, or not responding properly.

Physical signs including trouble breathing, vomiting, overheating or very hot skin, shaking or seizures, blue or pale lips, collapse or unconsciousness.

Higher-risk situations

Mixing substances, alcohol involved, using alone, overheating or dehydration, lack of sleep or food, or unknown or stronger substances.

What to do first

- Stay calm.
- Do not leave them alone.
- Check responsiveness.
- Check breathing.
- Use the recovery position if needed.
- Get help early.

What not to do

- Do not let them sleep it off.
- Do not give more substances.
- Do not force water if they cannot swallow.
- Do not delay seeking help.

What we see in real life

In real life, people often hesitate because symptoms come and go, or because they're worried about overreacting. Many serious incidents escalate during delays, not because help was unavailable, but because no one was sure when to act.

What helps in practice: Trust your instincts. You do not need certainty to ask for help. Emergency services would rather assess someone early than arrive too late.

When to call 999 immediately

Call 999 if they are unconscious, not breathing properly, having a seizure, have severe chest pain, are overheating, vomiting repeatedly, or you suspect an overdose.

Key message

You do not need all the answers. Acting early and asking for help can prevent serious harm.

Educational use only. Not medical advice. If someone is unwell or at risk, seek professional medical help or call 999 in an emergency.