

# What to Know About Medication Errors in Nursing Homes

## Take action with an Atlanta nursing home abuse and neglect lawyer

When you entrust a nursing home to care for your loved one, you expect them to be treated with compassion, dignity, and professionalism. Unfortunately, that trust can be shattered when a preventable mistake, like a [medication error](#), causes serious harm.

If you suspect your loved one was given the wrong medication, the wrong dose, or suffered from a delay in treatment, you don't have to figure this out alone. At [Johnson Greer Law Group](#), we help families across Georgia hold negligent nursing homes accountable. When medication errors happen, your loved one deserves justice for the facility's negligence.

## What is a medication error?

A medication error is any preventable mistake in the prescribing, dispensing, or administering of medication. In a nursing home setting, these errors can happen at any point in the process – from the doctor's initial order to the nurse giving the medication to the resident.

These aren't harmless accidents. In many cases, they occur due to negligence or even abuse. Medication errors can result in serious health complications, hospitalizations, or even death. And often, these errors are not reported to the family unless someone starts asking questions.

## Types of medication errors in nursing homes

Medication errors can take many forms. Some of the most common include:

- **Wrong medication:** Administering a drug not intended for the resident.
- **Wrong dose:** Giving too much or too little of a medication.
- **Missed doses:** Failing to give a scheduled dose.
- **Wrong time:** Giving the medication too early or too late.
- **Improper route:** Delivering the medication in the wrong way (for example, oral instead of intravenous).
- **Drug interactions:** Combining medications that negatively interact with each other.

Each of these errors can have devastating consequences, especially in elderly patients with pre-existing medical conditions.

## How medication errors happen in nursing homes

Sadly, medication errors in nursing homes are often a result of negligence. These facilities are frequently understaffed and overworked, which creates an environment where mistakes are more likely to occur. Some of the most common causes include:

- **Understaffing and overworked staff:** When there aren't enough nurses or aides, medications can be rushed or skipped entirely.

- **Poor training:** Staff who aren't properly trained on medication procedures are more likely to make dangerous errors.
- **Lack of supervision:** Without proper checks and balances, mistakes can slip through unnoticed.
- **Miscommunication:** Errors often occur when doctors, nurses, and pharmacists aren't on the same page.
- **Faulty recordkeeping:** Outdated or inaccurate charts can lead to confusion about which medication a resident is supposed to receive.

These mistakes put your loved one's well-being in jeopardy, and often, families are the first to notice something isn't right. Being aware of the warning signs can make all the difference.

### **Warning signs of a medication error**

In many cases, your loved one may not be able to tell you what happened. They may have cognitive challenges such as dementia or trouble with speech – or they may be reluctant to report mistreatment out of fear of retaliation or not being believed. That's why it's crucial to know the signs that something may be wrong. Keep an eye out for:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behavior
- Increased confusion or disorientation
- Unusual sleepiness or fatigue
- New or worsening symptoms
- Difficulty breathing
- Rash or allergic reaction
- Unexpected hospitalizations or medical interventions

If something seems off, trust your instincts. You have every right to ask questions and demand clear answers from the nursing home staff.

### **The consequences of medication errors**

The impact of a medication error can range from mild to life-threatening. In elderly patients, even a small mistake can cause a chain reaction that leads to severe complications. Some of the consequences include:

- **Worsening of medical conditions:** Missed or incorrect medications can make existing health issues worse.
- **New health problems:** Side effects from the wrong drug or dosage can lead to new illnesses or injuries.
- **Falls and physical injuries:** Medication errors can cause dizziness or confusion, leading to dangerous falls.
- **Hospitalization:** Many medication errors require emergency treatment.
- **Death:** Tragically, some errors result in fatal outcomes.

Some facilities may try to minimize or cover up the incident. But families deserve answers – and justice.

### **What to do if you suspect a medication error**

If you suspect your loved one was harmed by a medication error in a nursing home, take action right away. Start by documenting any symptoms, when they began, and any conversations you've had with staff. Then, request your loved one's medical records. You have a legal right to them, and they may reveal what medications were given.

You should also speak directly with the facility's director or management about your concerns. If something still doesn't feel right, file a complaint with the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) and contact an experienced nursing home abuse lawyer. It can feel overwhelming, but your attorney can make the process less stressful for your family and help protect your loved one and hold the facility accountable.

### **How a nursing home abuse and neglect lawyer can help**

If you think your loved one was harmed by a medication error, it can be helpful to reach out to a nursing home abuse and neglect lawyer. They can investigate what happened, gather medical records, and consult with experts to help build a case for your family. They can also help you file a legal complaint, navigate Georgia's nursing home laws, and deal with the facility's insurance company on your behalf.

Beyond the legal work, a good lawyer understands how emotional these situations can be. They'll guide you through every step, answer your questions, and give your family the support you need to move forward. Most importantly, they'll fight for accountability and for the justice your loved one deserves.

### **Take the first step toward justice with Johnson Greer Law Group**

Medication errors in nursing homes are preventable, and they should never be brushed off as "just a mistake." If your loved one has suffered due to a medication error, your family deserves answers, accountability, and justice.

At Johnson Greer Law Group, we proudly stand by families in Georgia suffering from nursing home abuse and neglect. We make sure your case gets the attention it deserves. [Contact us](#) today for a [free consultation](#). We'll listen to your story, explain your legal options, and help you decide what to do next. We fight hard because your loved one deserves better.

*"Attorney Johnson is a wonderful & professional attorney. He is ALWAYS a phone call away, he will continuously update you & your family about your case. Always answer questions & find good solutions to the problems you may have. Very honest & will lead you in the right direction. THANK YOU."* – Nisha T, ★ ★ ★ ★ ★