

## Patient information

# Pain killer for moderate to severe pain Quick acting (normal release)

**Name of medicine:** Morphine – quick acting  
Oxycodone - quick acting

**Other names:** Oramorph, Sevredol or Oxynorm – tablets or liquid

### What is it for?

Quick acting strong opioids should reduce your pain within about 30 minutes and last for about four hours. It is often given regularly when your doctor is working out how much morphine you may need to control your pain. It is also used to control breakthrough pain quickly.

### Aren't strong opioids only used right at the end?

No. Strong opioids are given for different sorts of severe pain. This may be as a result of a heart attack or after a major operation. If you have cancer or life limiting illness, treatment with a strong opioid may be needed to allow you to live as pain free as possible. You can go on taking these medications for as long as you need to. The dose can be increased if needed.

### When do I take it?

You may be told to take quick acting morphine / oxycodone regularly every four hours. An extra dose can be taken if the pain comes back between the regular doses (breakthrough pain).

If you are taking regular long acting pain relief, quick acting morphine / oxycodone can

also be taken between doses for breakthrough pain.

If the pain is persistent after 30 minutes, take another dose of the quick acting morphine/oxycodone. After this we recommend you leave one hour between further extra doses.

If you need to take more than two extra doses in a day, tell your doctor or nurse.

## **What should I do if I forget to take a regular dose?**

Take the dose as soon as you remember. Do not take a double dose to make up for the missed one. If you are sick and vomit the medicine, repeat the dose as soon as you feel better.

## **Are there any side effects from taking morphine?**

- **Sleepiness:** This is most common when you first take morphine regularly or when the dose is increased. It should settle after a few days.
- **Constipation:** This is a very common side effect. It is important to drink plenty of fluids and always take a laxative regularly as prescribed by your doctor. The dose of laxative can be increased or reduced to make sure you pass a soft motion regularly.
- **Sickness:** If you feel sick when you first start to take morphine, try taking it with food. Your doctor may need to give you some anti-sickness medicine for a few days until the sickness goes away.

## **Will my body get used to opioid medicine?**

Yes, probably. Over time opioids can become less effective as your body gets used to the medication (this is called tolerance). You can also become dependent on opioid medicines (dependence). This means that if you stop taking the drugs suddenly, or reduce the dose too quickly, you can get symptoms of withdrawal. This can also happen if you run out of medication. Symptoms you may experience are:

- tiredness
- sweating
- a runny nose
- stomach cramps

- diarrhoea
- aching muscles

Tell your doctor or nurse if you get any of these symptoms.

## **What should I do if certain things, like movement, bring on pain?**

Some people find that doing certain things like having a bath or going for a walk brings on the pain. Your doctor or nurse may suggest you try taking a dose of quick acting opioid 30 minutes before you start doing something that brings on the pain.

## **Will morphine always relieve my pain completely?**

Although morphine is a very good pain killer, it is not helpful for all types of pain. Other treatments may be needed and suggested by your doctor or nurse.

## **How will I know if the morphine is not going to work for some of my pain?**

You may still have pain despite taking bigger doses of morphine and may feel unwell in one or more of these ways:

- more sleepy than usual
- feeling sick more of the time
- restlessness or jumpiness
- bad dreams

Do not worry if this happens but do tell your doctor or nurse. Your doctor may reduce your dose of morphine and suggest other treatments to help the pain.

## **How to store morphine / oxycodone**

- Keep out of reach and sight of children
- Do not store above 25°C

- Store in the original container to protect from light
- Do not use this medicine after the expiry date which is stated on the bottle label or foil for tablets and on the outer carton. The expiry date refers to the last day of the month
- Medicines should not be disposed of via wastewater or household waste. Ask your pharmacist how to dispose of medicines no longer required
- Please return any remaining liquid morphine to your pharmacist three months after first opening

## Can I drive?

It is a driver's responsibility to decide whether they consider their driving is, or they believe might be, impaired on any given occasion.

- Do not drive if any symptoms or signs develop suggesting that your driving may be impaired, such as experiencing sleepiness, poor coordination, impaired or slowed thinking, dizziness or visual problems.
- Do not drive at certain times when the risk may be temporarily increased, eg when first starting, or when first increasing or reducing the dose of, a medicine that may potentially impairing your driving. This applies for five days after any change to your medication.
- To take particular care in circumstances that may increase the risk of your driving being impaired whilst taking your medicine and to avoid driving if this occurs. Such situations could include:
  - \* if another prescribed medicine, or over the counter medicine, is added that could also impair your driving alongside the already potentially impairing medicine(s)
  - \* if there is a developing medical condition that could increase the risk of the impairing side-effects from the prescribed medicine
- Be aware that alcohol taken in combination with other impairing drugs can substantially increase the risk of accidents.
- It is helpful to carry evidence of your prescription with you whilst driving.

## Can I drink alcohol?

A small glass of wine, beer or a sherry may help you feel better and improve your appetite. It is best to avoid taking more than this as you may become drowsy.

## If you have any questions or require advice

Please telephone the Palliative Care Team on 01284 713776, available

Monday - Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm, Saturday 8.00am to 4.00pm

Or email: [palliativecare@wsh.nhs.uk](mailto:palliativecare@wsh.nhs.uk)

If you have been discharged from hospital, please contact your GP, or if out of hours, telephone 111

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)*

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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