

PAIN KILLER FOR MODERATE TO SEVERE PAIN

Name of medicine: Morphine - quick acting, (normal release)

Other names: Oramorph or Sevredol - tablets or liquid

Q. What is it for?

A. Quick acting morphine should reduce your pain within about 30 minutes and a dose should last for about 4 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.

Q. Isn't morphine something that's only used right at the end?

A. No. Morphine is given for different sorts of severe pain. This may sometimes be as a result of a heart attack or after a major operation. If you have cancer, treatment with morphine may be needed to allow you to continue as pain free a life as possible. You will be able to go on taking morphine for as long as you need to. The effects do not wear off with time and the dose can be increased if needed.

Q. When do I take it?

A. You may be told to take quick acting morphine regularly every 4 hours. An extra dose of quick acting morphine should be taken if the pain comes back between the regular doses. Quick acting morphine can also be used like this if you are taking a regular long acting pain killer. Wait about 30 minutes after taking the extra dose. If you still have pain take another dose of the quick acting morphine. If you need to take more than 2 extra doses in a day, tell your doctor or nurse.

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

A. 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. Tell your doctor or nurse. Your doctor may reduce your dose of morphine and suggest other treatments to help the pain.

Q. Can I drive?

A. Once you get used to taking morphine and do not feel sleepy or unwell you may be able to drive. You must discuss this with your doctor

Q. Can I drink alcohol?

A. 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 too drowsy.

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Q. What do I do if I forget to take a regular dose?

A. 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 bring up the medicine, repeat the dose as soon as you feel better.

Q. 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.

Q. Will I become addicted to morphine and unable to stop taking it?

A. If you no longer need your morphine, the dose can be reduced gradually by your doctor without problems.

Q. What do I do if certain things like movement bring on pain?

A. 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 morphine 30 minutes before you start doing something that brings on the pain.

Q. Will morphine always relieve my pain completely?

A. 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.

PAIN KILLER FOR MODERATE TO SEVERE PAIN

Name of medicine: Long acting morphine (controlled release)

Other names: MST continus tablets or granules

Q. What is it for?

A. Morphine is used for moderate to severe pain. Long acting morphine is used to control on-going pain.

Q. Isn't morphine something that's only used right at the end?

A. No. Morphine is given for different sorts of severe pain. This may sometimes be as a result of a heart attack or after a major operation. If you have cancer, treatment with morphine may be needed to allow you to continue as pain free a life as possible. You will be able to go on taking morphine for as long as you need to. The effects do not wear off with time and the dose can be increased if needed.

Q. When do I take it?

A. This type of morphine is taken every 12 hours to prevent pain. When you are at home you can take your morning dose when you wake up and then the evening dose about 12 hours later. Do not stop taking morphine suddenly.

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

A. 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. Tell your doctor or nurse. Your doctor may reduce your dose of morphine and suggest other treatments to help the pain.

Q. Can I drive?

A. Once you get used to taking morphine and do not feel sleepy or unwell you may be able to drive. You must discuss this with your doctor

Q. Can I drink alcohol?

A. 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 too drowsy.

Issue date: January 2002

Review date: December 2003

Q. What do I do if I forget to take a dose?

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

Q. Are there any side effects from taking morphine?

Sleepiness

This is most common when you first take morphine 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.

Q. Will I become addicted to morphine and unable to stop taking it?

A. If you no longer need your morphine, the dose can be reduced gradually by your doctor without problems.

Q. Will morphine always relieve my pain completely?

A. 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.

Q. What do I do if I get pain between the regular 12 hourly doses?

A. If the pain is mild, paracetamol may help. If it is more severe you should take a dose of quick acting morphine (liquid or tablets). Wait about 30 minutes and if you still have pain take another dose of quick acting morphine. If you need more than two extra doses in a day, you may need the long acting morphine dose increased. Tell your doctor or nurse.

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 morphine before you start doing something that brings on the pain.

- **Changing from another pain killer:**
A few people who change from another pain killer to fentanyl feel unwell in the first 24-48 hours with sickness, shivering, stomach pains or diarrhoea. Contact your doctor if this happens.
- **Heat effects:**
The patches are waterproof so you can have a shower or bath or go swimming. Avoid too much direct heat like a hot water bottle, electric blanket, heat lamp or hot spa bath as this affects the way the medicine is released from the patch. If you develop a fever try to keep your temperature down and contact your doctor.
- **Patch falls off frequently:**
Sweating or applying the patch to hairy skin may prevent it sticking well. You may be given some sticky tape to keep the patch on.

Q. Can I drive?

- A.** Once you get used to using fentanyl and do not feel sleepy or unwell you may be able to drive.
You must discuss this with your doctor.

Q. Can I drink alcohol?

- A.** 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 too drowsy.

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PAIN KILLER FOR MODERATE TO SEVERE PAIN

Name of Medicine: Fentanyl

Other name: Durogesic patch

Q. What is it for?

- A.** Fentanyl is used for moderate to severe pain. Fentanyl is used to control on-going pain. It is not used for pain which only lasts a short time. You will be given a different, quick acting pain killer to take for breakthrough pain if you need to.

Q. How do I take Fentanyl?

- A.** The medicine is inside a patch with a sticky back which is stuck on to the skin. The pain killer, fentanyl, slowly passes from the patch through the skin into the body. Each patch is used only once.

Q. How long does a fentanyl patch last?

- A.** Each patch lasts for three days. Change your patch (or all your patches), every third day, at about the same time of day. Use a calendar to mark the day when you first start your patches and when you change them. You should not stop using fentanyl suddenly.

Q. How do I change my patch(es)?

- A.** (1) Take the old patch off, fold it in half so that it sticks together and put it back in its original pouch. The used patch can then be put in the bin with your household rubbish.

- (2) Wash your hands. Choose a place on the upper body or upper arm. The skin should not have any cuts, scars or spots and should not be too hairy. Clean the skin with water only, make sure it is cool and completely dry.
- (3) Tear open the pouch of the new patch. Peel the plastic backing off. Stick the patch on to the clean area of skin. Press it on firmly. Wash your hands. *Do not stick the patch on the same place twice in a row.*

Q. What do I do if a patch falls off or I forget to change it?

- A.** Stick a new one on as soon as you can. If you are very late changing your patch, you may need to take another pain killer until the fentanyl starts working again.

Q. What should I do if I still get pain while using fentanyl?

- A.** When you first start fentanyl or the dose is increased it takes time to work. Your doctor will give you extra pain killers to take if you need them until your patch is working completely. Some people find that doing certain things like having a bath or going for a walk brings on pain. Your doctor may suggest you take a quick acting pain killer before you start doing something that brings on pain.

If your pain is not well controlled and you are needing to take more than 2-3 doses of extra pain killer a day tell your doctor.

Q. How will I know if fentanyl is not going to work for some of my pain?

- A.** Although fentanyl is a very good pain killer, it is not helpful for all types of pain. You may still have pain despite using bigger doses of fentanyl 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. Tell your doctor or nurse. Your doctor may reduce your dose of fentanyl and suggest other treatments to help the pain.

Q. Are there any side effects from using fentanyl?

- **Constipation:**
Fentanyl tends to cause less constipation than some other strong pain killers but you may still need to take a laxative regularly.
- **Sleepiness:**
This is uncommon but, if you become unusually sleepy or muddled, you may need the fentanyl dose reduced. Contact your doctor.
- **Skin rash/irritation:**
If you develop itching or redness under the patch, tell your doctor.