

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

YOU AND YOUR SYRINGE DRIVER



WHAT IF I THINK THE SYRINGE DRIVER IS NOT WORKING?

Do not worry if you think something is wrong. Do not worry if the syringe driver alarm sounds. Try the following:

If the light on the right hand side stops flashing – change the battery and then press the button labelled START/BOOST. The light should begin to flash.

If the tubing becomes disconnected from the syringe – Simply reconnect the tubing onto the end of the syringe by gently screwing it back on.

If the alarm sounds – Remove the battery, as it is the only way to stop the noise. Check the tube to see if it is twisted. If the syringe is disconnected from the machine, attach it again with the thin black strap. Replace the battery and press the START/BOOST button.

If the syringe is empty – Contact your nurse.

If the needle has come out – Contact your nurse.

If the needle site is swollen and red – Contact your nurse.

If your symptom of pain or sickness is not controlled – Contact your nurse.

If you are worried or have any more questions about your syringe driver, contact either your doctor or nurse.

Advice is also available from:

OVERGATE HOSPICE – 01422 379151

KIRKWOOD HOSPICE - 01484 557900

CALDERDALE SPECIALIST PALLIATIVE CARE TEAM

01422 222713 (Mon – Fri 9 am – 5 pm)

HUDDERSFIELD SPECIALIST PALLIATIVE CARE TEAM

01484 342965 (Mon – Fri 9 am – 5 pm)

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SYRINGE DRIVER?

- It is normal for the syringe driver to make a whirring noise every few minutes. This noise will not be loud enough for everyone to hear or to keep you awake at night.
- It is normal for a yellow light to flash every 20 seconds on the right- hand side of the syringe driver. If the yellow light does not flash, then the battery may need to be changed. Always use a 9V long life alkaline battery, PP3.

A fresh battery should last for about 50 days.

To change the battery:

The battery compartment is located on the back of the syringe driver. It has a removable, sliding cover. Slide the cover off. Turn the syringe driver on its side and remove the battery by tapping it gently onto the hand. Replace it with a fresh battery and replace the cover. An alarm will sound for several seconds and then stop. This shows that the battery has been inserted properly. Press the START/BOOST button. The syringe driver will continue to work. Check that the yellow light is flashing.

- A constant piercing sound is the machine's alarm. If it goes off, do not worry.

It will sound:

- a) if the syringe is empty
- b) if there is a blockage in the tubing

The only way to silence the alarm is to take out the battery.

WHAT IS A SYRINGE DRIVER?

A syringe driver is a battery-powered machine. It is small enough to be held in one hand. It is made up of five parts:

1. The machine itself
2. A syringe which contains your medicines.
3. A length of thin tubing with a thin plastic needle on the end.
4. A plastic cover that protects the machine.
5. A bag to carry the syringe driver in.

When the syringe driver is started, the nurse will place the plastic needle just under the skin. The needle will be placed either on your chest, your tummy or on the top of your arm or leg. The needle will be held in place with a small clear dressing. You may feel the plastic needle as it is put into the skin, but this will soon wear off. Usually the needle can stay in one place for several days. The needle will need to be taken out and a new one inserted if the needle gets sore or uncomfortable.

Diagram: Numbered parts

HOW WILL A SYRINGE DRIVER HELP ME?

The syringe driver is designed to give you your medicines over a 24 hour period. A syringe driver does not mean that you are getting worse. It is often used when you cannot take pills due to feeling sick or problems with swallowing. It is also used to avoid having to give lots of injections.

Every day, at about the same time, your nurse will come and check the syringe driver and insert a new full syringe containing your medicines. The syringe driver may contain different medicines depending on your needs. It is possible to give medicines for pain and sickness together in the machine.

You may only have the syringe driver for a few days or weeks or you may need the syringe driver for longer.

WILL I NEED TO CHANGE MY LIFESTYLE?

Hopefully not. The syringe driver should make your life more comfortable so you can be as active as you wish.



BATHING

You can have a bath or shower. Try to keep the needle site dry if possible. Keep the syringe driver away from the water by putting it on a stool beside the bath or shower. If the syringe driver gets wet, it will no longer work.



GOING OUT

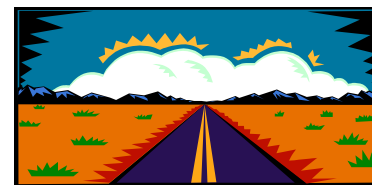
You can go out and about with the syringe driver.

You can carry it in a specially made bag or put it in your pocket if you want. You can be taken out in the car but you should ask your doctor for advice on driving yourself.



EATING

You can eat and drink whatever you like. A small amount of alcohol will do you no harm.



GOING ON HOLIDAY

It is possible to go away for a short holiday if you or one of your family/friends learn to change the syringe. In the UK it may be possible to organise for nurses from the area you are visiting to change the syringe. When travelling abroad some drugs need a special licence or may be unavailable, eg diamorphine in the USA or France. (see leaflet 'Travelling Abroad')

In some cases it may be possible to set the syringe driver to run over a longer period of time.



MOBILE PHONES

It is advisable not to use a mobile phone near a syringe driver as it may affect the way the syringe driver works.

CLOTHES

You can wear anything you like, but loose clothing may be preferred – cardigans instead of jumpers.