

Information for Patients and Carers about the Graseby MS16A Syringe Driver

What is a syringe driver?

A syringe driver is a small, battery operated pump. It allows medication to be given evenly over a period of time, usually a 12 or 24 hours. Graseby is the manufacturer of the model MS16A syringe driver that you will use. The syringe driver is on loan to you and is the property of Camden PCT/Islington PCT/The Royal Free Hospital/The Whittington Hospital/ UCL Hospitals/ Edenhall Marie Curie Centre (Please delete as applicable)

Why do I need one?

We advise you to use a syringe driver for a number of reasons. It may be that you are having difficulty swallowing your medication or your body is having problems in absorbing medication. Sometimes it is the best way to ensure a regular and even amount of medication is reaching your system in order to help you. The nurses and doctors caring for you will discuss your individual needs with you before setting the syringe driver up.

How does it work?

The driver pushes the plunger of the syringe to deliver your medication. The doctors and nurses caring for you will decide the rate. The syringe is connected to a length of tubing to which a small needle is attached. A nurse will place the needle under your skin. It will be carefully secured so that it does not become dislodged.

Once the syringe driver has been set up and is in operation it will occasionally make a gentle whirring sound, which is very quiet and should not disturb you. A small light will flash regularly to show that the battery is working. The syringe driver is designed to be lightweight and portable. Small carry bags or holsters can be provided by the nurses caring for you but you will need to ensure that when you move about the syringe driver is secured. When you are in bed or resting in a chair the driver can be placed on a flat surface next to you. You do not need to hold or carry it all the time.

The nurses caring will provide you with all of the equipment needed for the syringe driver. This equipment should be kept together. A small box will usually be provided for this purpose. Please make sure that this box is easily accessible

for staff visiting you at home. They will need to check the contents regularly and provide new supplies as required.

How do I know if the syringe driver is working properly?

Syringe drivers are serviced at least once a year to make sure they are working properly. The person providing your syringe driver will have checked that it is in good working order before setting it up.

The flashing light indicates that the battery is working properly. The small whirring noise shows that the mechanism is working. Whenever a nurse visits you at home she/he will check that the pump is operating correctly and you are receiving the medication prescribed.

If there is a problem with the mechanism an alarm will sound. This is a high-pitched continuous noise. When setting up the syringe driver your nurse will let you hear this noise so that you can recognise it.

The nurse or doctor setting up your syringe driver will show you some simple checks to make sure things are working properly. These will include:

- Showing you how to make sure that the syringe is correctly positioned in the syringe driver.
- Checking that the liquid inside the syringe is clear and free from crystals.
- Checking that your skin around the needle looks normal and is not sore or painful.
- Showing you how the tubing is safely and firmly connected to the syringe to avoid leakage and making sure there are no kinks in the tubing.
- Showing you how to remove and replace the battery

What do I do if the light stops flashing?

The most important thing is not to worry. The light will stop flashing because the battery needs replacing, or because an alarm has sounded and the driver has switched itself off. For alarms see the next paragraph. To replace the battery turn the syringe driver over, slide open the small cover and remove the old battery. Discard the old battery so that it cannot be used again by accident. Insert a new battery (taking care to remove the small protective black cap) and replace the cover. To continue the delivery of your treatment press the white **start/test** button on the front of the syringe driver. The person setting the syringe driver up will show you how to do this. A spare battery is provided should it be required.

Please do not adjust or move any other part of the syringe driver. If the light still does not start flashing please call your community nurse.

What do I do if the alarm sounds?

The most important thing is not to worry. It will silence itself after a short time. Removing the battery easily stops the alarm. The person setting the syringe driver up will show you how to do this. Please do not adjust or move any other part of the syringe driver. The alarm sounds because the pump has stopped – either the syringe is empty or the plunger has stopped moving for some other reason. The person setting up the syringe driver will tell you what to do, when they first visit, so please make a special note of their guidance, in the space below.

What should I never do to my syringe driver?

Do not immerse the syringe driver in water or wear it while bathing. Do not drop your syringe driver. If any of these things happen, please call your community nurse for a replacement.

What should I do if I am worried that the syringe driver is not working properly or has become damaged in some way?

Do not hesitate to contact your community nurse if you have any worries or concerns.

The 24 hour contact number for community nursing is: 020 7530 3456

The community nurse will be able to advise you of any immediate actions you should take and if required will be able to visit you to provide the necessary care.

If the Community Nurse feels that further advice is required then she/he will contact your specialist palliative care team. Sometimes adjustments may be required to the medication and the doctors and nurses will discuss these changes with you.

If you have any difficulty contacting your community nurse then please contact your specialist palliative care team or haemoglobinopathy service on the number below.

Camden and Islington Palliative Care Team:

020 7530 6200 - Monday - Friday 9am-5pm

Between 5pm and 9am during weekdays and at all times at the weekend call 0207387 9300 and ask for Palliative Care

The Whittington Hospital Palliative Care Team:

020 7288 5227 (9am - 5pm Monday to Friday)

The Royal Free Palliative Care Team:

020 7794 0500 (Ext. 3861) - Monday - Friday 9am-5pm

On weekends between 9am and 5pm phone 020 7794 0500 and ask them to air call the Palliative Care Team

For Haemoglobinopathy Care:

Service Manager, Haemaglobinopathy Clinic, Tollington Way N7

020 7530 2051 or 020 7530 2050

What should I do when I no longer need the pump?

Please ensure that when the syringe driver is no longer required it is returned to the service that lent it to you. Then it can be serviced and lent to another patient. Your community nurse will be able to advise you if you are unsure.