

Can I drive?

- Morphine may cause drowsiness. If this happens, do not drive
- Be aware of this when making any changes to the dose of Morphine taken.

What should I tell the doctor?

- If you are allergic to any drugs
- If you are taking any other medicines or herbal medicines
- If you are pregnant or breast feeding, or if you are planning to become pregnant in the future
- If you have a kidney problem
- If you have or have had a history of excessive alcohol use, recreational drug use or addiction to prescribed or over-the-counter medication
- If you are on antidepressant medication or other opioid medication.

What if I want to stop taking Morphine?

- If you stop taking Morphine suddenly, you might experience withdrawal symptoms such as cold sweats, shaking, diarrhoea and sickness. Speak to your healthcare professional (doctor, nurse or pharmacist) who will be able to supervise a gradual reduction.

This information is not intended to replace your doctor's advice. We advise you to read the manufacturer's information for patients, which will be supplied by your pharmacist when your medicine is dispensed. Keep all medicines away from children, vulnerable adults or pets.

If you have any queries, please contact:

Chronic Pain Clinic
Leith Community Treatment Centre
12 Junction Place, Edinburgh, EH6 5JA
Tel: 0131 536 6276/6277/6269

Further information: <http://www.fpm.ac.uk/faculty-of-pain-medicine/patient-information>



Lothian Chronic Pain Service

**Morphine Sulphate
for the Treatment of Chronic Pain in
Adults**

Patient Information Leaflet

Why have I been prescribed Morphine Sulphate?

- Morphine belongs to a group of medicines called opioids
- It is for the treatment of **severe** pain, usually acute pain and occasionally persistent pain
- Morphine can be used to treat different types of pain such as musculoskeletal and neuropathic pain.

How does Morphine work?

- Morphine acts on opioid receptors in the body mainly in the brain and spinal cord which reduces the transmission of pain messages.

When should I take it?

- Morphine comes in several formulations and can be short acting or long acting
- Short acting Morphine is taken when pain has become severe and lasts 2 - 4 hours
- Long acting Morphine, or Modified Release, is for control of persistent pain and is taken twice a day and last for 10 – 12 hours.

How is Morphine Sulphate taken?

- Morphine is available as capsules, tablets, suppositories and syrup form, and in varying doses
- The medication should be swallowed whole, with a glass of water and may be taken on an empty or full stomach
- Do not chew or crush the capsules or tablets
- Do not take more than prescribed
- Morphine is started at a low dose to assess its effectiveness and to avoid or reduce side effects. A usual dose may be 10-30mg twice a day
- From time to time your pain specialist or GP may suggest reducing the dose slightly if your pain is improving. This lets you know if you still need morphine at that dose and reduces problems with side effects and tolerance (see below).

How long will it take to work?

- You should start to feel it working within 30 minutes to 1 hour.

What are the possible side effects?

- As with all medicines, side effects may happen but not everyone will experience them
- Common side effects include feeling sick, constipation, dizziness and drowsiness
- Less common side effects include itching, sweating and dry mouth
- Some side effects may be short lived and pass after the first few doses
- Starting on a low dose and slowly increasing can help avoid some side effects
- If side effects occur and they are severe, speak to your GP, pharmacist or pain doctor
- **Occasionally some people have an allergic reaction to morphine - if you have difficulty breathing, wheeziness, swelling of your eyelids, face or lips, or get a rash, contact your GP or NHS 24 at once**
- Although we have mentioned the most common side effects in this leaflet, there will be a full list in the patient information sheet with your medication.

Can I take this medication long term?

- Ideally opioid medications like Morphine are taken for short periods only but some patients do gain benefit long term
- Over time, tolerance to Morphine develops. This means your body adapts to having the drug and it can become less effective.
- Morphine can lead to long term side effects such as immune suppression and hormone imbalances
- When buying 'over the counter' medicines, you must inform the pharmacist that you are taking Morphine.

Can I drink alcohol?

- Alcohol increases the sedative effects of Morphine, it is best not to drink alcohol when you start taking it. Once settled on a steady dose, you may drink alcohol in moderation but it may make you more drowsy than normal.