

Understanding morphine

Morphine is a common medicine in the treatment of pain and breathlessness. This brochure explains how we use morphine and may answers some questions you might have.

Will I become addicted?

Many people worry about this. When used for pain or breathlessness, addiction is almost never a problem. When you no longer need it, your doctor or nurse can slowly reduce your dose until the pain has stopped without morphine. Your doctor or nurse can explain more.

Can I drink alcohol if I use Morphine?

Yes, a small amount of alcohol is safe when taking morphine. It is important to know that taking both together sometimes make you sleepy or drunk quicker than usual. Do not drive with morphine **and** alcohol in your body.

Can I drive if I use Morphine?

You should not drive or use heavy machinery if:

- you feel sleepy or can't concentrate
- you are feeling weak or in pain
- you have just started taking morphine or your dose has increased
- daylight is low (morphine can affect your sight)

Once you're on a steady comfortable dose you can usually drive. Talk with your doctor if unsure. You should also check with your insurance policy to make sure you're covered. **Remember it's your risk - if you're not sure, don't drive.**



Our namesake
The Venerable Mary Potter

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Morphine

Pain

Pain is a horrible feeling, and may cause suffering and distress. All pain hurts and can wear you out. Pain can also make you angry, make it hard to sleep, or not want to eat. Pain can make it hard for you to enjoy life and be happy, and sometimes, it can make it hard for others to enjoy time with you. Dealing with your pain may allow you to be more comfortable and tend to what is important to you at this time.

Infection and many other illnesses can cause pain. For those with cancer pain may occur when a tumour presses on nerves or body organs or when cancer cells have caused harm. Cancer treatments such as chemotherapy, radiation, or surgery may also cause pain.

There are many ways to treat pain – relaxation, breathing, massage, and various medicines depending on the pain you're experiencing. Morphine is just one way to treat severe pain. This brochure may answer some questions many people ask or think about. Remember you can always speak with your Doctor and Nurse if you have any further questions about your pain, your medicines and your care.



What is Morphine?

Morphine is medicine given to help treat severe pain and other symptoms including breathlessness. It's a strong painkiller from the opioid family of medicine. You may be given morphine to take regularly or for short-term pain relief.

Morphine may be prescribed by a Doctor as tablets, slow-release tablets and capsules, oral liquid drops (elixir), and injections.

- Long acting (slow release) morphine is sometimes called "M-eslon" and is a capsule to swallow and must not be chewed. It is used for constant or prolonged pain.
- Fast acting (normal release) morphine works quickly. It is for sudden or pain that 'breaks through'. It is a capsule to swallow. It is sometimes called "Sevredol".

Will Morphine kill me?

There are some incorrect stories about morphine. Using morphine can help with pain and breathing. When used in the right way it does not hurry death. Having morphine does not mean you are closer to the end. Managing pain helps you feel comfortable. Many people have morphine for ongoing chronic pain and live full, enjoyable lives.

What are the side effects?

Some people worry that the side effects of the morphine will be worse than the pain. Not everyone has side effects, and most of the side effects are brief and can be managed with your doctor or nurse.

The most common side-effects are:

- Constipation – taking laxatives, drinking water, moving, and high fibre foods like fruit and vegetables can all help keep your bowels more regular.
- Sleepiness or confusion – may happen for only a short time after starting treatment, or when a dose is increased. It usually stops after a few days. Do not drive or operate dangerous machinery if you feel sleepy or confused.
- Vomiting (being sick) and nausea (feeling sick) – may stop after a couple of days. Other medicines can help you feel better.

Tell your doctor or nurse as soon as you have any of these side effects. Don't be afraid to share the level of pain you are feeling. Share how often you feel pain so they can help you.

