Outstanding Care, Compassionate People, Healthier Communities

NHS Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Medicine used for pain relief

The aim of this leaflet is to give you general information about the pain medication we use in hospital/clinic and what the doctor may prescribe for you to help manage your pain.

Medicine
Most patients with chronic pain will take some kind of medicine. These come in many different types of preparations which include tablets, patches, liquids, or skin creams.

Paracetamol is a medicine on its own. It can be very effective. Do not think that because you can buy these over the counter, they will not help your pain.

Paracetamol is often found in a combination with weak opioid medicines. Here are the most common ones:

Co-codamol:
- 8/500mg (8mg of codeine and 500mg of paracetamol) can be bought over the counter.
- 30/500 (30mg of codeine and 500mg of paracetamol.

Opioids (weak):
- Tramadol
- Codeine
- Dihydrocodeine.

Opioids (strong):
- Morphine - this may be slow release tablets or normal release tablets/ liquids.
- Oxycodone - this may be slow release tablets or normal release tablets/liquid.
- Buprenorphine - this may be a slow release skin patch or a normal release tablet (under the tongue).
- Fentanyl - this will be a slow release skin patch.

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs):
- Aspirin
- Ibuprofen
- Naproxen
- Celecoxib.

You will probably notice some effect within an hour of taking these tablets, but if you take a slow-release preparation, these will take longer.

If you miss a dose of any drug, it is not a problem. Just take your next dose when it is due. Do not take two doses at the same time.

Slow release should be taken at the same time every day.

Side effects
Most medicines have some side effects as well as beneficial effects.

If you experience any of the following common side effects, you may wish to talk to your doctor, practice nurse or Pain Management Team at the hospital:

- Drowsiness and dizziness.
- Nausea (feeling sick).
- Vomiting (being sick).
- Constipation or diarrhoea - useful laxatives are senna or sodium docusate (available from your local pharmacy/supermarket).
- Headache.
- Itching.

Call your doctor right away if you experience any of the following:
- Fast/racing heartbeat
- Confusion/hallucinations
- Fainting
- Skin rash (severe)
- Blurred vision
- Vomiting blood
- Passing blood when opening your bowels.

Anti-depressants and anti-convulsants
These are useful in the treatment of nerve pain:
- Amitriptyline
- Nortriptyline
- Gabapentin
- Pregabalin
- Duloxetine.

It may take a week or so before you get the full benefit from anti-depressants/anti-convulsant medicines. They need to be taken regularly to have a good effect.

You and your doctor will discuss the need for them to be increased/decreased or when and how to stop taking these tablets, as they should be reduced slowly and not just stopped.

If these cause you to be drowsy or dizzy, **DO NOT** drive or operate machinery.

Drinking alcohol while taking tablets is best avoided as it may increase side effects. Alcohol is a drug too; it has the same side effects as some of the medications listed. Modest amounts are unlikely to cause problems.

Take your tablets with water, not hot or fizzy drinks. Swallow them whole. Do not crush or chew them unless told to by your doctor.

Eat regularly as this reduces sickness.

ALWAYS keep your medication in a safe place, **OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN.**

If you require more information refer to the information leaflet that comes with your medication or ask your pharmacist or GP.

Contact details
If you have any further questions please call the Pain Management Office on telephone 01623 622515, extension 4047 and ask to speak to one of the nursing staff.

Further sources of information
NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions
Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)
PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222
Newark Hospital: 01636 685692
Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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