

## Controlled Drugs - Opioid medicines

This leaflet relates to the following medicines:

### What are controlled drugs?

Controlled drugs (sometimes referred to as CDs) contain powerful ingredients. Opioid controlled drugs in particular are used to relieve moderate to severe pain and must only be taken by the person they are prescribed for. Opioids are medicines which are used to treat moderate to severe pain. Examples include codeine, morphine, pethidine.

Controlled drugs can be prescribed as:

- tablets, capsules or liquids to be taken by mouth
- patches to be put on your skin
- injections to be given by the doctor or nurse
- lozenges to be sucked
- nasal sprays
- suppositories

### What side effects might I expect?

Common side effects in this group of medicines may include:

- nausea
- constipation
- transient drowsiness (short-lasting)

If you suffer from any undesirable side effects, please speak to the pharmacist, nurse or doctor. Do not stop medication suddenly.

**NEVER share your medicines, as they can be harmful if used by people for whom they are not intended. Your medicines should be stored securely to prevent illegitimate use by others. If you suspect your medicines are being diverted for use by others, or have been stolen, please report this to a Healthcare Professional.**

### How do I take my medicine?

Always follow the directions on the label to ensure you take the correct dose. For liquids, always ensure the dose is measured out properly and never take a 'swig from the bottle'. Your pharmacist can provide a measuring cup or spoon. For patches, always ensure that the last patch is removed before applying a new one.

Taking controlled drugs may make you feel drowsy or affect your ability to concentrate, so driving or operating heavy equipment/machinery should be avoided, if affected.

## Storage

Keep all medicines:

- securely closed in the original container with the label intact
- out of the sight and reach of children
- stored away safely where you or your carer can easily find them
- away from direct sunlight, heat and moisture

## What to do when medicines are no longer required

Controlled drugs, as with all medicines, need to be disposed of in a safe way. All unused controlled drugs should be returned to your local community pharmacy for safe disposal. If you are unable to take the medicines to the community pharmacy yourself, a relative, friend, neighbour or carer can do this on your behalf.

## What to do in an emergency

If somebody else has taken your controlled drug or you have taken more than the prescribed dose, contact your local community pharmacist, doctor or local Emergency Department (A&E) for advice.

In an emergency, dial **999** for an ambulance.

Alternatively, call **NHS 111** by dialling **111** (available 24 hours).

**If an ambulance has been called, please remember to keep any medicines (and their containers) that have been taken to show the doctor, nurse or paramedic.**

## Sources of information

Further information can be obtained from:

- Medicines Information - Conquest Hospital – Tel: 01424 757067
- Medicines Information - Eastbourne DGH – Tel: 01323 413785
- Pharmacy Department, East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
- NHS 111
- Your GP
- Your Local Pharmacy

## Important information

### Collecting your prescription

When you receive new supplies of your controlled drug, always remember to check the name and strength to ensure you have been given the correct medicine. If in any doubt, speak to your pharmacist for advice. You may be asked to provide proof of identity when collecting a prescription for certain controlled drugs.

### Keeping a List of Current Medications

Always keep an up-to-date list of your current medication and take this to all health-related appointments. If you are admitted to hospital or the hospice, take all your medication with you (in the original containers with the labels intact). It is important to let any doctors and nurses looking after you know which medicines, including controlled drugs, you are taking. They will need to know how much and how often you are taking them and whether you have experienced any side effects.

## Changing or Stopping your Prescriptions

If you would like to reduce or stop taking your controlled drug, please discuss this with your doctor.

## Obtaining further supplies

Remember that if you are unable to pick up further supplies of your controlled drug, you will need to make alternative arrangements with your pharmacist. If you have agreed with your pharmacist that someone else will be collecting your prescription, they may be asked to provide proof of their identity.

## Other medicines

You can check whether your controlled drug interacts with other medicines you are taking by reading the leaflet you are given with the medicine. You can also ask your pharmacist, prescriber, or nurse if you have any concerns.

## Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team - Tel: 0300 131 4500 Ext: 135860 or email: [esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net)

## Hand hygiene

The Trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

## Other formats

**If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department. Tel: 0300 131 4500**

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your pharmacist, nurse or doctor.

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## Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Dr Barclay, Consultant for Palliative medicine

ESHT Inpatient Pain team

ESHT Palliative Care Team

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:

Medicines Optimisation Group

Next review date: September 2021

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