

## Contacts:

Hospital Palliative Care Team 0161 922 6686 Seven days a week 8.30am - 5.00pm  
Community Palliative Care Team 0161 342 7770 Seven days a week 9.00am - 5.00pm  
GP Out-Of-Hours Medical Provider Number 111  
Palliative Care Out-Of-Hours Willow Wood Advice Line 0161 330 5080  
Other Contacts:

## Resources

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence [CG140] August 2016  
Macmillan.org.uk  
The British Pain Society  
The British National Formulary September 2016  
The DVLA <https://www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions>  
Greater Manchester Strategic Clinical Network Palliative Care Pain and Symptom Control Guidelines

Copies of this information are available in other languages and formats upon request.

آپاںی بادی اہی تہا پڑتے با بڑتے نا پارےن، تاہلے انگرہہ کرے ا پانیک ہلہا ٹیمز ساہے ٹےکفونے  
بوغابوغا کرفن 0161 331 5149/5150 اہی ناہارے، تہن ارا آپناکے ساہبا کراتے پارے۔  
آپو آہا پ آہا ماہلےنی ٲاٲی ٲ نامش راہا ٲاہلے نی ٲاٲا ٲاٲا، آہی ٲاٲا ٲاٲا ٲاٲا  
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اگر یہ معلومات پڑھ نہیں سکتے ہیں یا آپ کو اس کی سمجھ نہیں آتی ہے تو براہ مہربانی ہمیں ایم کے ساتھ ٹیلی فون نمبر  
0161 331 5149/5150 پر رابطہ کریں تو وہ آپ کی مدد کر سکیں گے۔

If this leaflet is required in alternative formats e.g. braille, audio, other languages please contact the Patient Information Centre 0161 922 5332.

In accordance with the Equality Act we will make “reasonable adjustments” to enable individuals with disabilities, to access this treatment/service.

## Strong Opioids (Painkillers) in Cancer & Palliative Care

An information leaflet on Strong Opioids, their use and frequently asked questions to support conversations that you will have with your Doctor or Specialist Nurse







## What to do if I miss a dose of modified release Opioid?

If you have missed a dose of modified-release Opioid medicine **do not take two doses together**; you may take the missed dose within two hours of when it was due to be taken.

You should take the next dose when it is due and use immediate release medicine if you have increased pain before this.

## Can I drive whilst taking strong Opioids?

You should discuss this with your doctor and you must not drive or operate machinery if you feel drowsy or unsafe to do so for any reason.

You should not drive until you know how your Opioid medicine affects you (especially just after starting or changing the dose of the medicine).

Once you are on a stable regular dose of a 'modified release' strong Opioid you may be able to continue to drive as long as you do not experience any side effects which could impair your driving ability.

You must inform the DVLA of any condition that could affect your ability to drive safely - for more information on this, visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions>

You should inform the DVLA if your medication causes side effects likely to affect safe driving. You may also need to inform your insurance company about your medical condition(s) and medications you are taking to make sure that your insurance remains fully valid.

In 2015 there were changes to the law on driving whilst taking medicines including Opioids. When driving, it may be helpful to keep with you evidence that the Opioid you are taking is a medicine which has been prescribed for you by a healthcare professional.

## Will I become addicted to Morphine?

Some people worry that they may become 'addicted' to strong Opioids - in fact, if used for pain relief in the correct way and monitored, addiction to Opioids is extremely unlikely.

## Is it safe to drink alcohol while taking opioid medicines?

Using alcohol at the same time as taking strong opioids may affect concentration, particularly when a new opioid medication is started or the dose is being increased.

The combination of strong opioids and alcohol may make you feel sleepy or drunk sooner than usual so it is sensible to drink much less than you are used to until you know what effect it has on you.

## Does taking a strong Opioid mean I am at the end of my life?

No. The right time to start strong Opioids is the time when you have pain bad enough to need them. This is not affected by how long you are going to live for. Good pain control makes you more able to do things and can improve the quality of your life.

## If I use Opioids now, will they work in the future?

Some people worry that if they start strong painkillers too early they will not work as well in the future. In reality, whilst the side effects of Opioids may reduce over time, the pain killing effects often do not. If pain does worsen, careful changes in the dose of Opioid medication can be very effective.

## Can I take Opioid medications abroad?

If you are planning a trip abroad you may need a letter from your doctor or a special license. You should check the laws of the country/countries you are travelling to as different countries have different rules on the importation and use of Opioid medicine. The UK- based embassy or consulate of a country may be able to offer advice on this.

Opioid medicines should be kept in the original container in hand luggage with the original prescription and you should be aware of any restrictions on the amount of liquid you are allowed to carry in hand luggage.

## How should opioids be stored?

Your medication needs to be kept in a safe place out of the reach of children. It needs to be stored in the original container. Return unused medication to a pharmacy.