

# Strong Oral Opioids for Acute Pain: Information for Adult Patients (Over 16 years)

This leaflet is relevant to **NEW** or **CHANGED** prescriptions for:

- Immediate release* morphine sulphate oral solution (Oramorph®) or tablets (Sevredol®)
- Modified release* morphine sulphate capsules (Zomorph®) or tablets (MST®)
- Immediate release* Oxycodone capsules (Shortec®) or liquid (Shortec® liquid)
- Modified release* Oxycodone tablets (Longtec®)

**Immediate release opioids:** 0h  
 For quick pain relief  
 Work for 4-6 hours



**Modified release opioids:** 0h  
 Release gradually  
 Work for 12 hours



## What are strong opioids?

**Opioids are a *short term* option for acute pain**  
**Opioids can significantly *reduce* pain, but rarely *stop* pain altogether.**

- Opioids** are strong morphine, or morphine-like, pain relievers.
- Acute pain** comes on quickly and usually has a cause such as an injury
- Opioids are not effective for all types of pain.
- They are less effective for long-term pain due to tolerance and side effects.
- The best opioid dose is the lowest dose possible that makes pain manageable.
- Reducing your pain will allow you to breathe deeply, cough and move around. This lowers the risk of serious complications such as chest infections, blood clots and pressure sores.

## How long should I take opioids for?

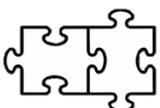
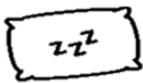
**It is important that you do not take opioids for longer than you need.**

- The aim is to gradually lower the amount you are taking and stop them (or return to your normal dose) before your supply runs out.
- Hopefully you will not require a repeat prescription of opioid medication.

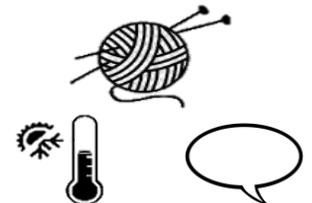
**If you are still in significant pain or need support, please contact your GP.**

## How can I manage my pain?

**There are many proven options to help you other than medication:**



Gentle exercise  
 Get a good nights sleep  
 Distract yourself! Knit, complete a puzzle...  
 Hot and cold packs  
 Talk about it with someone you trust



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## How should I take these medicines?



Do not drink alcohol or take other medicines that make you drowsy whilst taking these medicines **UNLESS** prescribed by your doctor.



If these medicines make you feel drowsy you may not be fit to drive or operate machinery. For information: [www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law](http://www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law)



If you have other medicines prescribed for pain make sure you use them as prescribed to lower the amount of opioid you need.

**Please do not take more pain relief than you are prescribed. If you do please seek medical advice.**

## What side effects could I experience?

**Nausea or vomiting**- can be managed with anti-sickness medication.

**Constipation** - can be managed with laxatives

**Drowsiness or confusion** - can be managed by adjusting the dose or opioid choice.

**Tolerance** - your body can get used to opioids and they can become less effective.

**Dependence** - if you decrease the dose too quickly you can experience symptoms of withdrawal such as sweating, stomach cramps and muscle aches.

**Your local pharmacist is a great source of support and advice for managing your medications. Contact your pharmacist if you have questions or concerns.**

**If serious side effects occur seek medical advice.**

## Where can I get more information?

### Telephone Helplines:

Nottingham University Hospitals Trust Tel: 0115 924 9924 ext. 64641

Sherwood Forest Hospitals Trust Tel: 01623 672213

Primary Integrated Community Services Pain Services: 03000 830 000

### Internet Resources (can be found via google or any other search engine)

- Faculty of Pain Medicine: *Taking opioids for pain*
- British Pain Society: *Understanding and managing pain: information for patients*
- My Live Well with Pain