

PATIENT INFORMATION

Morphine for pain after tonsillectomy in children

Introduction

This leaflet is about using liquid morphine (oral morphine solution) to reduce pain after tonsillectomy (removal of tonsils). Morphine is a type of painkiller and will help your child feel less pain. If able, children should take other painkillers including paracetamol and ibuprofen before using morphine.

How to use Liquid morphine

- Give a dose of morphine when they first complain of pain. **Wait at least 4 hours before giving another dose.**
- **You must not give your child more than four doses of morphine in 24 hours**, so you may have to wait up to 6 hours between doses.
- Write down the time that you give each dose, to help you remember.
- Do not give extra doses of morphine, as this can be dangerous.

How much should I give?

- Your doctor will work out the amount of morphine (the dose) that is right for your child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.
- **You should measure the amount using the syringe supplied.**
- **Never use a kitchen spoon or drink from the bottle.**

When should the medicine start working?

- Your child should start to feel less pain about 30 minutes after taking morphine. It may take up to an hour for the morphine to work properly. It should last around 5 hours.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

- If your child is sick after having a dose of morphine, do not repeat the dose.
- Wait at least 4 hours before giving any more morphine.

What if I forget to give it?

- If your child is in pain, give the missed dose as soon as you remember. Then you must wait at least 4 hours before giving any more.

What if I give too much?

- **It can be dangerous to give too much morphine.**
- The box below lists some of the symptoms that your child may get if they have had too much morphine. However, your child may not necessarily show any of these symptoms - therefore if there is any possibility that your child may have had too much morphine, take your child to hospital straight away. Take the medicine container or pack with you, even if it is empty. This will be useful to the doctor.

Symptoms resulting from having too much morphine include:

- Pupils of the eyes (the black circles in the centre) becoming very small.
- Difficulty breathing or breathing more slowly.
- Feeling faint or sleepy.
- Racing heart rate.

If your child starts to show any of these symptoms, or you are at all worried that your child may have had too much morphine, contact your doctor or take your child to hospital.

- **If your child seems very sleepy, or they have problems with their breathing, or stop breathing, phone for an ambulance straight away.**

Side-effects you need to know about

- Your child may feel sick or be sick after taking morphine.
- Your child may get constipation (have difficulty doing a poo). You can help by giving your child plenty to drink while they are taking morphine. Your doctor may also suggest that you give them a laxative - a medicine that will help them go to the toilet. It is important that your child doesn't strain on the toilet.
- Your child may get headaches, have a dry mouth, or sweat, and their skin may flush (go red) or itch.
- They may have changes in mood, sleep disturbances, or feel dizzy or light-headed when they stand up.
- Your child may find it difficult to pass urine (do a wee). Contact: Day Surgery 01803 654055 before 19:00 or out of hours (19:00-08:00) please contact hospital switchboard: 01803 614567 and ask for Bleep 110.
- Children taking high doses of morphine may develop shaking or muscle cramps (myoclonus). Contact: Day Surgery 01803 654055 before 19:00 or out of hours (19:00-08:00) please contact hospital switchboard: 01803 614567 and ask for Bleep 110.

Can other medicines be given at the same time as morphine?

- Some painkillers and cough medicines contain codeine or dihydrocodeine (you can find this information on the label). **Do not give these to your child when taking morphine.**
- You *can* give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told you not to.

- Check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving any other medicines to your child. This includes herbal or complementary medicines.

Is there anything else I need to know about morphine?

- You may have heard that some people can become addicted to morphine or dependent on it. This is very unlikely to happen when morphine is given to children in pain for short periods of time.
- An antidote can be given to someone who has had too much morphine. This has to be done in hospital.
- The liquid medicine contains a small amount of sugar and ethanol (alcohol).

Where should I keep this medicine?

- Keep the medicine in a cupboard, away from heat and direct sunlight. It does not need to be kept in the fridge.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

What if my child is still in pain?

If your child is still in pain after their tonsillectomy despite using morphine (and paracetamol and ibuprofen if able) then you should contact:

Day Surgery 01803 654055 before 19:00 or out of hours (19:00-08:00)

please contact hospital switchboard: 01803 614567 and ask for Bleep 110.

Do not give extra doses of morphine

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.