

PATIENT INFORMATION

Penthrox® (“Green Whistle”) for Pain Relief in Children and Young People (6 to 18 years)

Information for Parents & Carers

What is Penthrox®?

Penthrox® is a strong pain-relieving vapour that your child breathes in through a small hand-held device called the ‘Green Whistle’. It contains a medicine called methoxyflurane, which has been used safely in hospitals worldwide for many years. The dose used for pain relief is much lower than doses once used for anaesthesia.

Why has my child been offered Penthrox®?

- To provide fast, strong pain relief after an injury (e.g. broken bones, dislocations, burns, or cuts).
- To help with painful procedures in the Emergency Department (e.g. applying a cast or dressing).
- It avoids needles and works quickly (usually within 6 to 10 breaths).

How does my child use it?

- Your child will be shown how to hold the inhaler and breathe in and out through the mouthpiece.
- They will be in control of when to use it – only your child should hold the device.
- Breathing out through the inhaler is important as it traps the vapour and protects staff nearby.
- The first few breaths may taste or smell strong and can sometimes cause coughing – this usually settles quickly.

Benefits

- Rapid, strong pain relief.
- Self-controlled – your child can use more or less as needed.
- Often reduces the need for injections or stronger sedating medicines.

Are there any side effects?

Most children do not experience side effects. If they do occur, they are usually mild and short-lived once the inhaler is removed. These can include:

- Dizziness or drowsiness
- Headache
- Coughing
- Feeling sick or being sick
- Unusual taste or smell in the mouth

Rare but more serious side effects may include:

- Allergic reactions
- Problems with the liver or kidneys
- A very rare condition called malignant hyperthermia (sudden high fever after anaesthetics)

If you notice anything worrying, tell a doctor or nurse immediately.

Aftercare and going home

- The effects wear off quickly once your child stops inhaling Pentrox®.
- Most children are ready to go home shortly after use, once safe to discharge.
- You will be given advice on when to return.
- If your child becomes unwell, develops a temperature, or you are worried after going home, please seek medical advice immediately and let staff know that your child recently received Pentrox®.

Any questions?

Please speak to the doctor or nurse looking after your child. We are happy to explain anything further.

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