

Information for patients, families and carers

Managing side effects of opioid medicines in hospital



What are opioid medicines?

Opioid medicines help to reduce strong pain.

There are many forms of these medicines, including tablets and capsules, oral liquid, patches and injections.

You have been prescribed the following opioid medicines (please list):

Common side effects

All medicines may come with some unwanted side effects. The most common side effects of opioid medicines are:

- constipation
- nausea and vomiting
- dizziness or feeling light-headed or faint (especially when standing up quickly)
- drowsiness
- confusion

Speak to your nurse, doctor or pharmacist if your pain relief is not working well or if you have any side effects that worry you.

You should talk to your doctor and ask how to best manage constipation. Speak to your doctor or nurse if you are becoming constipated.

You can avoid dizziness by getting up from lying or sitting more slowly. Call your nurse for some help if you feel dizzy when getting up from lying or sitting.

Serious side effects

Make sure you and your family and/or carer are aware of the following side effects.

If you experience any of them, tell your nurse or doctor immediately.

- feeling very sleepy or having trouble staying awake
- your breathing slows down or becomes weak
- seizure, fits or convulsions
- an allergic reaction such as:
 - rash
 - hives
 - itching of the skin
 - difficulty breathing
 - wheezing
 - swelling of tongue, throat, lips or face

While in hospital, if you or your family and/or carer are still worried about any of the above serious side effects after speaking with your nurse or doctor, you can make a REACH call or contact your hospital's patient escalation service. Ask your nurse about the hospital's patient, family or carer escalation service.



Call: _____

Information for patients, families and carers. Managing side effects of opioid medicines in hospitals.
Released August 2019.
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