



Morphine for pain



This leaflet is for parents and carers about how to use this medicine in children. Our information sometimes differs from that provided by the manufacturers, because their information is usually aimed at adults. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again.

- Do not give extra doses of morphine, as this can be dangerous.
- When you get a new prescription of liquid medicine, check how much you should give, in case you have been given a different strength.
- Do not stop giving morphine suddenly.

Name of medicine

Morphine

Common brands: Actimorph, Oramorph, Sevredol, Zomorph

Modified release tablets and capsules: Filnarine SR, MST Continus, MXL, Morphgesic, Zomorph

Why is it important for my child to take this medicine?

Morphine will help to control your child's pain.

What is morphine available as?

- **Tablets:** 10 mg, 20 mg, 50 mg (these may contain lactose)
- **Liquid medicine:** 10 mg in 5 mL or 20 mg per mL (this contains small amounts of sugar and ethanol [alcohol])
- **Modified-release tablets and capsules** are available in a range of doses from 5 mg to 200 mg
- **Granules:** 20 mg, 30 mg, 60 mg, 100 mg or 200 mg per sachet
- **Suppositories:** 5 mg, 10 mg, 15 mg, 20 mg, 30 mg

When should I give morphine?

- Morphine is best given regularly to keep your child's pain under control. This is every 12 hours for modified-release morphine or every 4 hours for other forms of morphine.
- The packaging will tell you which type of morphine you have and how often you can give it. If you are not sure, check with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- Write down the time that you give each dose, to help you remember.
- If your child has pain that comes and goes, you can give a dose of morphine when they first complain of pain. Follow the instructions in the packaging for the next dose, if they need one.

How much should I give?

Your doctor will work out the amount (the dose) that is right for *your* child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.



It is important that you follow your doctor's instructions about how much to give.



If you have a new prescription, check how much to give, in case this is different from before.

How should I give it?



Tablets/capsules should be swallowed with a glass of water, milk or juice. Your child should not chew the tablet/capsule.



Granules: Sprinkle or stir the granules into a small amount of soft food (e.g. yogurt) or a small drink. Your child should then swallow all the food or drink straight away, without chewing.



Liquid medicine: Measure out the right amount using an oral syringe or medicine spoon. You can get these from a pharmacist. Do not use a kitchen teaspoon as it will not give the right amount.



Different strengths of liquid medicine may be provided, especially by hospital pharmacies, so always check how much to give when you get a new liquid medicine.



Suppositories are inserted into the rectum (the back passage). Full instructions can be found on our website [here](#).



Suppositories must not be taken by mouth.

When should the medicine start working?

- Your child should start to feel less pain within an hour of taking the first dose of morphine.
- It will take up to 12 hours for the first dose of a modified-release preparation to work properly. Your child will be given other pain relief for this time.
- After this, giving morphine regularly should keep your child's pain under control. If it doesn't, contact your doctor or pharmacist.



Do not give extra doses of morphine.

What if my child is sick (vomits)?

Children are often sick or feel sick for the first few days of taking morphine. Your doctor may prescribe another medicine to help with this.

Tablets, capsules, granules or liquid medicine

- If your child is sick less than 30 minutes after having a dose of morphine, give them the same dose again.
- If your child is sick more than 30 minutes after taking a dose, you do not need to give another dose. Wait until the next normal dose.

Suppositories

You do not need to worry if your child is sick as the medicine will still work.

What if I forget to give it?

- Don't worry if you forget a dose, as morphine stays in the body for a while and will continue to work.
- Give the missed dose when you remember. After that, give the next dose after the usual number of hours (12 hours for modified-release tablets/capsules and granules; 4 hours for other forms).



Never give a double dose of morphine.

What if I think I have given too much?



It may be dangerous to give too much morphine. If your child seems very sleepy, or if they have problems breathing, your child may have had too much morphine. Phone for an ambulance **straight away**. Take the medicine container or pack with you, even if it is empty.

Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to make our children better, but sometimes they cause unwanted effects (side-effects).

Side-effects you must do something about



If your child has difficulty breathing, stops breathing, or seems very sleepy, phone for an ambulance **straight away**.

- Other side-effects you need to know about
- Your child is likely to feel sick or be sick (vomit) for the first few days of taking morphine. Your doctor may prescribe another medicine to help with this.
- Children often get constipation (difficulty doing a poo) when taking morphine. Encourage them to drink plenty of fluid. Your doctor may suggest that your child also takes laxatives – medicines 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).
- They may have changes in mood and sleep disturbances. They may feel dizzy or light-headed when they stand up.
- Your child may have difficulty passing urine (doing a wee). Contact your doctor if this happens.
- Children taking high doses of morphine may develop shaking or cramps in the large muscles of the body (myoclonus). Contact your doctor if this happens.
- There may sometimes be other side-effects that are not listed above. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your doctor. You can report any suspected side-effects to a UK safety scheme at mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard.
- More information on side-effects can be found in a [leaflet](#) on our website.

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

- Do not give your child painkillers or cough medicine that contain codeine or dihydrocodeine (you can find this information on the label).
- You can give your child paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Medicine should not be taken with some medicines that you get on prescription. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about any other medicines your child is taking before giving medicine.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist before giving any other medicines to your child. This includes herbal and complementary medicines.

Is there anything else I need to know about this medicine?

- Do not stop giving morphine suddenly, as your child may get withdrawal symptoms and their pain may come back. If your child needs to stop taking morphine, your doctor will reduce the dose bit at a time.
- You may have heard that some people become addicted to morphine or dependent on it. This is unlikely to happen when morphine is given to children for pain. Talk to your doctor if you are concerned. You can read more about this on [the MHRA website](#).
- Morphine is often given to children and adults with life-threatening or terminal illnesses. Morphine does not shorten the person's life.
- An antidote can be given to someone who has had too much morphine. This has to be done in hospital.

General advice about medicines

- If you are not sure a medicine is working, contact your doctor but continue to give the medicine as usual in the meantime. Do not give extra doses, as you may do harm.
- Try to give medicines at about the same times each day, to help you remember.
- Only give this medicine to your child. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same, as this could do harm.
- If you think someone else may have taken the medicine by accident, contact a doctor straight away.
- Make sure that you always have enough medicine. Order a new prescription at least 2 weeks before you will run out.
- Make sure that the medicine you have at home has not reached the 'best before' or 'use by' date on the packaging. Give old medicines to your pharmacist to dispose of.

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk



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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.

Who to contact for more information

Your doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about morphine and about other medicines used to manage pain.

You can also get useful information from:

England: NHS 111

Tel 111 www.nhs.uk

Scotland: NHS 24

Tel 111 www.nhs24.scot

Wales: NHS 111 Wales

Tel 111 www.111.wales.nhs.uk

Northern Ireland: NI Direct

www.nidirect.gov.uk

www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk



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