Instructions for patients taking liquid morphine
This leaflet has been written to give you information about taking your prescribed liquid oral morphine. Your doctor has prescribed ‘Oramorph’ to control your pain.

Here are some simple steps that you need to follow in order to get the best effect:

• Take the prescribed dose every four hours to begin with. For example: 7.00am, 11.00am, 3.00pm, 7.00pm and 11.00pm, 3.00am. You can alter the exact times to fit in with your routine, as long as they are four hours apart.

• The last dose at 11.00pm can be doubled up, so that you are less likely to wake in pain or need to take a dose in the middle of the night. Only take your 3.00am dose if you wake up in pain.

• If you are still in pain, despite taking the liquid every four hours, then take an extra dose. You can take this as early as 30 to 40 minutes after taking your last dose. Continue to take your regular dose, even if it is due as little as half an hour later. Let your doctor know how many extra doses you have needed so we can adjust your regular dose.

• It is helpful to keep a record of how much oral morphine you need every day, so that when you see your doctor a decision can be made as to whether the dose needs to be increased.

• You can still take paracetamol and diclofenac together with morphine if you have been prescribed them, as they work in a different way.

• About a third of people feel sick when first taking oral morphine and you may also have been prescribed an anti-sickness medication. Please take this regularly if you feel sick – there will be instructions on the box to tell you how much to take and when. The body usually gets used to the medication within a week and the sickness will wear off.
• If you feel very drowsy on the dose you have been prescribed then you can halve the dose. Continue to take the smaller dose every four hours as before.

• Morphine does cause constipation and this does not wear off like the nausea does. Your doctor will have prescribed you some laxatives to help counteract this side effect. Take the laxatives regularly as prescribed.

• People who are in pain and need medication for pain control do not become addicted to the drugs even if high doses are needed. This is because the body uses the chemicals in the right way. It is important that, even when the pain has subsided, you continue to take the same amount of pain relief to help control your pain. When your pain reduces, or you no longer need the drugs, the extra morphine in your system may make you feel sleepy. This means that the dose should gradually be reduced. Please ask your doctor or Specialist Nurse for help with this.

• Prescriptions for cancer patients are free. Ask at your GP surgery for an exemption form.

If you have any concerns about taking oral morphine please discuss these with your medical team or your GP. You can contact us for advice over the telephone:

Head and Neck Cancer Specialist Nurses:  
Tel: 01865 234 346  
(Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 4.00pm)
If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

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