



If your child has difficulty breathing, stops breathing or seems very sleepy, phone for an ambulance **straight away**. Bring the bottle / box of what you have given the child with you as this will help the doctors and nurses caring for your child.

Safe Storage

Store all medicines in a secure cupboard well out of reach of children.

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**If you have any further questions please speak to one of our pharmacist's at
(01) 409 6100**

Your CNSp is also available to you as a point of contact and to offer support and advice during normal working hours at the numbers below:

Oncology CNSps

Claire McCall 01 409 6882

Jane Garland / Siobhan Broderick

01 409 6401

Olivia Quigley 01 409 6671

Haematology CNSp's

Fiona McKenna / Grainne O'Toole

01 409 6271

Pam Lannon & Michelle Mannion

01 428 2732

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Information for Parents on Managing Children's Pain during Chemotherapy



Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin, Dublin 12

....where children's health comes first

Questions you may have

For parents, making sure that your child is not in pain is of the utmost importance. Since treatment started, you have been advised not to use paracetamol or ibuprofen to deal with any painful episodes that arise when you are at home. Until recently codeine phosphate has been the medicine of choice to relieve pain in the paediatric haematology/oncology setting here in OLCCH and around the world. This has now changed, and in line with best international practice we will now prescribe low-dose morphine sulphate instead.

We hope this leaflet will help answer some of the questions you may have at this time and support you through this adjustment.

Prescriptions

Before you leave HODU or St John's Ward, you will be given a prescription for morphine sulphate, in tablet or liquid form as appropriate for your child

When you bring this prescription to your local pharmacy, please bring in the remaining codeine you have left at home and they will safely discard it for you

Remember

- **Oral morphine should be used for pain only. It should not be used for anything else and should never be given to another child or adult**
- **Never give more than the dose prescribed for your child. If you think the medicine is not working, contact St John's ward at 01-409 6660 or 01-409 6654**

What does it look like?

Oral morphine is available as a liquid called *Oramorph*® 10mg/5ml or as tablets called *Sevredol*® and comes in 2 sizes, 10mg and 20mg

How much should I give?

Your doctor will calculate the dose for your child. This dose should be then included on the medicine instruction label that your pharmacist places on the bottle or box. Read this label carefully and make sure you understand how to measure a dose. If in any doubt, ask your pharmacist to explain. It is really important that you follow these instructions carefully.

Will my child get constipated on morphine?

Yes, it is likely that morphine may cause constipation, in the same way codeine did. Prevention is always a good idea, so remember to add in or increase laxatives as needed when regular pain relief is needed.

Will it work as well as codeine?

For many years, codeine was used for pain relief in children. However, it does not work for everybody and in a small number of patients, serious side effects were seen. Experts now believe that oral morphine is better than codeine— it is more reliable for treating pain and avoids some of the problems of using codeine.

What about using codeine for cough?

Experts have strongly recommended that codeine is no longer used to stop cough because of concerning side effects.

Are there other side effects?

Like many medicines, oral morphine can cause some side effects.

Your child might feel sick and want to vomit after taking morphine. If this happens, you can give them a dose of ondansetron.

Some people get an itch if they need regular morphine. If this happens, you will be recommended an anti-itch medication to help.

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, and they may feel light-headed when they stand up.

If these side effects happen, please let your nurse or doctor know as soon as possible.

Will my child become addicted to morphine?

You may have heard that some people can become addicted or dependent on morphine. This is unlikely to happen to your child if you give it in the right way, at the *right dose and only for pain*. It is widely used for children with pain and does not shorten their life.

What if I make a mistake and give too much?



If you think you have given more than you should, contact St. John's ward straight away, at 01-4096654 or 01-4096660