



"Just in case" Injectible Medicines (Anticipatory Medications)

Information for patients,
carers and families

Just in case medications are also known as ‘anticipatory medicines’, these are medicines which are prescribed for you and are usually given by injection. They are given to you to be kept in your home ‘just in case’ you need them. This means you can be given a medicine to help relieve pain or other symptoms if you need it, especially during the night or at the weekend.

What are the medicines for?

You may not need any of these medicines right now however they have been prescribed for you because your healthcare team think that they may be needed at some point in the coming days or weeks to help with:

- **Morphine, Oxycodone or Alfentanil** for pain relief
- **Levomepromazine or haloperidol** for sickness/nausea
- **Hyoscine butylbromide** to help reduce phlegm that may build up in the throat that you cannot clear yourself
- **Midazolam** for anxiety or restlessness.

When will I need to take the just in case medications?

When you have symptoms that are not being controlled with your usual medication, you or your carer can phone your GP, community nurse or the out of hours community nursing service to come to the house to see you. The GP or community nurse will discuss your symptoms with you.

They may ask you to take an extra dose of your usual medicines if they think that this is what is needed.

If you’re unable to swallow your oral medication, are being sick or the medicine isn’t getting to where it needs to work (due to problems with absorption) then the GP or community nurse may give you an injection from your ‘Just in Case’ medicines.

Who gives the just in case medications?

In most cases, the just in case medications are given by the health care team. Some patients or their carers may wish to be involved in the administration of injectable ‘Just in Case’ medicines. If this is something that you would like to consider, please discuss this with your GP or community nurse.

If it is agreed that you or your carer can administer the medications, you or your carer will need to be taught about the medicines. You will have a structured plan available in your home incorporating what is required.

For example, when the medications can be given, how to give the injection, how to record the medicine has been given and who to contact for support. You will also be provided with the equipment required to give an injection (needles, syringe, sharp item disposal - ‘sharps’ bin).

More information will be given to you if you need just in case medications to be prescribed.