

Opioid infusion for children

Information for patients, parents and guardians

You have been told that your child is going to have an opioid infusion for pain relief.

Your child will be cared for by experienced ward nurses and supported by our pain service team. The pain service team is made up of anaesthetists and nurses who work together to make sure that each child has the best pain relief available. Anaesthetists are the doctors who look after your child when they are asleep during an operation and care for the pain relief afterwards.

We hope this factsheet will help to answer some of the questions you may have about pain relief using an opioid infusion.

What is an opioid infusion?

Opioid is a strong, pain-relieving medicine (or 'analgesia') often used to help relieve pain for children in hospital. An opioid infusion is a treatment that uses a fine tube to give opioid medicine to your child.

The tube will connect your child's drip to a syringe filled with opioid. The syringe is put in a special pump which is programmed to give a set amount of the medicine continuously.

We use an infusion rather than medicine by mouth because it is a quicker way of giving pain relief to a child and doesn't involve any injections.

All children are closely monitored by the nursing staff while they are having an opioid infusion. The nurses will change the amount of medicine given to your child as needed to help make them comfortable.

Side effects

Your child may experience some side effects, including:

- sleepiness
- feeling or being sick
- itching
- difficulty in passing urine

Encourage your child to tell the nurse if any of these happen.

Stopping the opioid infusion

Each child feels pain differently, so your nurse, doctor or anaesthetist will talk with you and your child about the best time to stop the opioid infusion. Our aim is to make your child comfortable. When the infusion stops your child may require further doses of opioid by mouth. We will also give them other pain-relieving medicines, such as paracetamol, at the same time as the opioid infusion and after the infusion has stopped.

Useful information

If you have any questions, please ask your nurse or contact our paediatric pain service on telephone: 023 8120 5134 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm).

Useful links

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Pain/Pages/Whichpainkiller.aspx>

<http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk/morphine-pain>

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audiotape, please telephone **023 8120 4688** for help.

www.uhs.nhs.uk/childrenshospital

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