

Patient information factsheet

Sativex

We have written this factsheet to give you more information about the medicine Sativex. It explains what Sativex is, how to take it and the possible side effects. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of our team.

What is Sativex?

Sativex is a cannabis-based medicine that is sprayed into the mouth. It is used to treat the common multiple sclerosis (MS) symptom of muscle stiffness and spasms (known as 'spasticity'). It is licensed in the UK for people with MS-related muscle spasticity that has not improved with other treatments.

How do I take Sativex?

A titration period (the process of adjusting the dose of a medication for the maximum benefit without adverse effects) is required to reach the correct daily dose for you. The number of sprays should be increased each day following the pattern in the table below.

You will start off by taking one spray of Sativex a day. You can then continue to gradually increase the dose by one spray per day, up to a maximum of 12 sprays per day, until your spasticity improves or you cannot tolerate the side effects of the medicine. You should always shake the spray container before you use it and leave at least a 15 minute gap between sprays.

The evening dose should be taken any time between 4pm and bedtime. When the morning dose is introduced, it should be taken any time between waking and midday.

Day	Number of sprays in the morning	Number of sprays in the evening	Total number of sprays per day
1	0	1	1
2	0	1	1
3	0	2	2
4	0	2	2
5	1	2	3
6	1	3	4
7	1	4	5
8	2	4	6
9	2	5	7
10	3	5	8
11	3	6	9
12	4	6	10
13	4	7	11
14	5	7	12

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You should continue to take the same number of sprays each day once you:

- have reached the maximum number of 12 sprays
- have achieved symptom control (your spasticity has improved)
- cannot tolerate the side effects caused by the next step on the table above

You can divide the total number of sprays over the whole day as needed for your symptoms. Make sure you always leave at least 15 minutes between each spray. You should also regularly change the part of your mouth you spray on to avoid soreness in your mouth.

Are there any side effects?

Side effects of Sativex include:

- feeling sick
- feeling sleepy
- dizziness
- tiredness
- diarrhoea
- headaches
- a dry mouth

Sativex may also make some MS symptoms worse, such as fatigue (extreme tiredness).

Side effects tend to ease after a few weeks. You can also reduce them by taking fewer doses each day.

Driving

Sativex is likely to affect your ability to drive. Do not drive while taking this medicine until you know how it affects you. You must not drive if the medicine makes you feel sleepy, dizzy, or affects your concentration or eyesight.

As Sativex is cannabis-based, it is a controlled drug. For this reason, it is an offence to drive if this medicine affects your ability to drive. However, you would not be committing an offence if:

- it has been prescribed to treat a medical problem and
- you have taken it as prescribed and
- it does not affect your ability to drive safely.

If detected in a drug test, you may need to produce evidence that Sativex has been prescribed for you.

Pregnancy and breastfeeding

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, think you may be pregnant or are planning to have a baby, ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice before using this medicine.

Contraception

Sativex may reduce the effectiveness of hormonal contraception, such as the 'pill' or the contraceptive implant. This means you will need to use an additional type of contraception, such as a copper intrauterine device, progestogen-only injectable or a levonorgestrel-releasing intrauterine system, while you are taking this medicine and for three months after your treatment has stopped.

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Additional advice

Please read the patient information leaflet that comes with the medicine in addition to this factsheet, as it contains important information.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the MS team.

Telephone: **023 8120 6864**

Email: **uhs.mssupport@nhs.net**

Useful links

www.mssociety.org.uk/about-ms/treatments-and-therapies/cannabis/sativex

www.nhs.uk/conditions/medical-cannabis

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**