Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust

‘Just in case’ medicines also called ‘anticipatory’ medicines

Information for Patients and Carers

What are ‘Just in case’ medicines?

‘Just in case’ medicines are a small supply of medications for you to keep at home ‘just in case’ you need them at short notice.

These medicines are usually provided for patients who have a serious underlying health condition and can help symptoms that aren’t improving with your usual prescribed medications. These medicines can be used to help a number of different symptoms such as pain, difficulty breathing, feeling and being sick, feeling anxious and unsettled / agitated. Having the ‘just in case’ medications at home means symptoms can be managed quickly, if and when the need arises.

Who will administer your ‘Just in case’ medication?

‘Just in case’ medication can only be given by a doctor or a nurse. The injections will usually be administered by a community nurse, for example, your district nurse.

Who provides your ‘Just in case’ medication?

At Home - This medicine will be prescribed by your GP or by a Nurse who has undergone special training/qualification (called an Independent Nurse Prescriber). The prescription will usually be sent electronically to your nominated pharmacy. You will need to arrange to collect the medications from the pharmacy unless you have an arrangement with the pharmacy to deliver to your home. Unfortunately district nurses are not allowed to collect the medicines for you.

On discharge from Hospital or Hospice - The doctors that have been caring for you, may provide ‘Just in case’ / ’Anticipatory medications’ for you to bring home. Please let your district nurses know if you have been given them.

What are the benefits of having ‘just in case’ medicines?

The benefit of having a supply of ‘just in case’ medicines is that they are available in your home when you need them. Most people are reassured by knowing that the medication is available, but you do not have to have these medications in your home if you prefer not to. However, you need to be aware that if you choose not to have them at home, it can be difficult to get these medicines in a hurry, especially at night or at weekends which may result in a delay in being able to administer the medicines. Please speak to your GP or district nurse if you would like to talk about this further.

compassionate care

What is the Community Palliative Care anticipatory drug chart?

The doctor or independent nurse prescriber will complete this chart so that the community nurses / care home nurses can give you the medicines, and so they know which medicines and which doses to give.

What are the side effects of these medicines?

All medications can have side effects. The possible side effects of the anticipatory medicines will vary depending on your condition and other medications you may be taking at the time. Your doctor or nurse will discuss possible side effects of the medicines with you and your carers if you should need to use them.

What medicines are used?

To treat:	
Pain	Morphine, Oxycodone.
Sickness	Haloperidol, Levomepromazine.
Troublesome chest secretions or treating abdominal cramps	Hyoscine Butylbromide (Buscopan) Glycopyrronium Bromide
Restlessness and distress	Midazolam, Levomepromazine, Haloperidol.
Difficulty breathing	Morphine, Oxycodone, Midazolam.

Water for injection or sodium chloride 0.9% are sometimes used to mix the medications.

Storing 'Just in case' medications

These medicines should be stored in their original boxes at room temperature. Make sure they are in a safe, secure place, out of the sight and reach of children.

It is very important that you do not give these medicines to anyone else; they have been prescribed only for you.

If you no longer need these anticipatory medicines please check with your district nurse before returning them to your local pharmacy.

Further information

If you have any questions about your 'Just in case' medicines you can ask your District Nurse, Palliative Care Team, Specialist Nurse, GP or Pharmacist.

If you are experiencing troublesome symptoms please contact your GP, District Nurse or Specialist Palliative Care.

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

British Medical Association, 'Anticipatory prescribing for End of Life Care', September 2020
Palliative Care Formulary (8th edition), Wilcock, Howard and Charlesworth, 2022
National Gold Standards Framework, 'GSF in Primary Care', May 2006 Page 2
Yorkshire and Humber Palliative and End of Life Care groups (Version 6), A guide to symptom management in Palliative care.

Your GP phone number is _____ (Mon-Fri 8am-6pm)

Calderdale patients District Nurse contact number is 01422 652291 (Which operates 24hrs a day, 7 days a week).

Kirklees patients District Nurse number is - 0300 304 5555 24 hours a day.
Palliative patients and families please use Fast track code 74567 which is inputted once you call the above number.

The Kirkwood advice line number is - 01484 557910 (24 hours a day).

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Calderdale Community Specialist Palliative Care Team
Telephone No: 01484 343814

CHFT Hospital Specialist Palliative Care Team
Huddersfield Royal Infirmary
Telephone No: 01484 346070

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

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