

Information leaflet for parents and Carers

Pain Relief after Surgery



This leaflet gives important information about your child's pain relief medicines and how to give them safely after surgery.

It is important to follow these instructions carefully and do not give your child more than the prescribed dose. This will be the right dose for their age and weight.

Information about Paracetamol

- Relieves mild to moderate pain
- Reduces high temperatures in colds and flu

Please follow the instructions provided on the bottle of paracetamol you have purchased or have been provided with by the hospital pharmacy department.

It can be given every 4 hours but do NOT give more than 5 doses in any 24 hour period.

Doses prescribed by the hospital may be higher than you would normally give at home for mild pain or fever, but this is to provide better pain relief after surgery and is still a safe dose. You should give it regularly, as prescribed, for the first few days.

The strengths of liquid paracetamol from different bottles may be different. Other medicines can also contain Paracetamol, so always read the label or ask your pharmacist for reassurance.

Information about Ibuprofen

- Relieves moderate pain
- Reduces swelling
- Reduces high temperatures

Please follow the instructions on the bottle supplied to you by the hospital pharmacy department. Do not exceed the stated dose.

After certain procedures, you may need to give this regularly for the first few days as well as regular paracetamol. They work together to reduce pain.

If possible give ibuprofen following milk or food.

Are there any side-effects?

Ibuprofen may occasionally cause an upset tummy, which is why we advise giving the medicine with either milk or food.

It may rarely (about 1 in 100 chance) make some children with asthma more wheezy. If this happens do not give any more, give them their inhaler and contact your GP.

Paracetamol and ibuprofen can be given at the same time or one of them given alternately every few hours.

We advise giving a dose of paracetamol and /or ibuprofen at bedtime. It is not necessary to wake your child in the night to give them pain relief, but if they do awaken and will not settle back to sleep, then you may need to give them some more pain relieving medicine provided this does not exceed the recommended dose.

Oral Morphine Solution

Your child may also need stronger pain relief, and may be prescribed morphine, by mouth as well as the Paracetamol and Ibuprofen in the first few days after their surgery. This will help reduce severe pain or discomfort and allow them to play, eat and sleep adequately.

Always follow the instructions on the pharmacy label as this has been worked out as the correct dose for your child, for their age and weight. This should be given only if it is needed. If your child is in a lot of pain and is not due a dose of either paracetamol or ibuprofen, give a dose of the oral morphine solution.

Please remember - do not give this to your child if they are drowsy and never wake your child up to give this pain relieving medicine.

Are there any side effects?

The most common side-effects of morphine are:

- itching
- constipation
- feeling sick or being sick

Rare side-effects:

- Finding it difficult to wee/pass urine
- Bad dreams/hallucinations

If any of these symptoms becomes a problem for your child please see your GP (family doctor).

The most worrying and very rare side-effects of morphine to carefully look out for are:

- Your child is very sleepy or difficult to wake
- Your child has difficulty breathing, is snoring severely or they may be breathing slowly or slower than normal.
- Your child's heart is beating very fast and they look unwell

If you notice any of these symptoms, take your child to the nearest Emergency Department immediately or phone for an ambulance.

Important Information about Morphine

- Never give more than the prescribed dose
- Never let anyone else take this medicine- it can be dangerous
- Please store all medicines in a safe place away from children
- When no longer needed, any unused medicine must be returned to a dispensing pharmacist/GP surgery/ hospital for safe disposal.

What if I give too much morphine to my child?

This can be very dangerous. Your child may become very sleepy or have problems with their breathing. Phone for an ambulance straight away and take the medicine bottle with you to hospital as this will help the hospital doctors work out what treatment your child needs.

Record of Painkiller Given

You may find it helpful to fill in the table below when you give pain relief for the first few days. It helps remind you when the pain relief is due and also to decide whether you can give more pain relief safely.

	DAY 1		DAY 2		DAY 3		DAY 4		DAY 5	
TIMES	P	I	P	I	P	I	P	I	P	I
Breakfast										
Lunch										
Dinnertime										
Bedtime										
	P=Paracetamol				I=Ibuprofen					

Time of morphine doses (a minimum of 6 hours between doses of morphine)					
Dose 1					
Dose 2					
Dose 3					
Dose 4					

Other ways to help your child feel better apart from giving medicine

It is common for parents to find their child may be more 'clingy' than usual, they may want cuddles and get anxious if you are not around.

You can help distract your child by reading stories, playing games, watching TV, doing puzzles or drawing and painting. Loose clothing may make your child more comfortable.

As long as your child is drinking it does not matter if they are "off their food". Their appetite will return when they feel better. If you are worried about your child please contact the ward your child was discharged from, the emergency department or your GP.

Looking after and sharing information about your child

We have a duty of care to help patients and families understand how information about them is kept and shared and we include the following information in all our patient leaflets:

Information is collected about your child relevant to their diagnosis, treatment and care. We store it in written records and electronically on computer. As a necessary part of that care and treatment we may have to share some of your information with other people and organisations who are either responsible or directly involved in your child's care. If you have any questions and/or do not want us to share that information with others, please talk to the people looking after your child or contact PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) on 0121 333 8403.

Further Information

If you feel you need any more information or have any concerns, please contact a member of the Pain Team on 0121 333 9644 or the Anaesthetic Department on 0121 333 9623.

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