

Patient Information

Syringe Pump



This leaflet provides information for you and your family/carer on the use of a syringe pump in the home, what it involves and what to expect.

What is a syringe pump?

A syringe pump is a small battery operated device which is used to deliver a continuous subcutaneous infusion of your medication. This means your medication is delivered continuously into the tissue under the surface of your skin.

The small tube that sits just under your skin is called a cannula and the medication is pumped through at a steady rate.



Syringe Pump

Why would I need it?

A syringe pump may be necessary if you are unable to take your normal medication because of having difficulty swallowing or feeling unwell.

Your nurse will fully explain the procedure to you and will be happy to discuss any queries you may have. Other health care professionals, such as your General Practitioner and Prospect Specialist Nurse may also be involved in any discussions to ensure the correct decision for symptom control is made based on all the information available.

Is it my choice?

Yes. Your informed consent is required to set up the syringe pump. If, after receiving the relevant information, you decide not to have the syringe pump then your decision will be respected. You also have the opportunity to change your mind at any point should you wish to.

If you are too unwell to make an informed decision, discussions will be held with your family and health care professionals about the best route to take for your care. This will be based on your best interests in the absence of any wishes stated in an advance care plan.

Does it hurt?

No. There may be an initial 'scratch' when the cannula is first inserted but when it is in place there should be no discomfort. The cannula is held in place with a special dressing which allows the site to be monitored without disturbing the dressing. The cannula can stay in place for several days and will be checked daily by the nurse.

Can I move around?

Yes. It is possible to move around while the syringe pump is working. You should ensure the pump is well supported and **kept at a level lower** than the cannula site for example being placed in a pocket or holster.



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Will I need to change my lifestyle?

No. The syringe pump should make you feel more comfortable so you can be as active as you wish. You can eat and drink as normal, and you can have a bath and shower but you need to keep the syringe pump out of the water. Your nurse can discuss appropriate ways in which to do this. It is important not to get the syringe pump wet so you cannot swim with a syringe pump.

The syringe pump needs to be kept within normal temperature ranges otherwise it may not work properly and the medication may be affected.

A nurse will visit you at approximately the same time every day to renew the medication in the syringe and ensure that you are comfortable.

Can I go on holiday?

It is important you discuss this with your nurse because some medicines do not react well to hot climates. We can teach a member of your family to care for your syringe pump or, if travelling within the UK, we can contact another nurse from that area who would be able to care for your syringe pump.

What are the benefits?

If you are feeling sick and are unable to take medicines by mouth or if you have swallowing difficulties then it means you can still receive medication to help relieve any symptoms such as pain and nausea. It is safe and easy to use and can prevent the need for lots of injections which can be uncomfortable.

How long will I need the pump?

You may only need the syringe pump for a few days or it may be a few weeks. Your nurse will discuss your specific needs with you so you know what to expect. The pump is on loan from Swindon Community Health Services and will need to be returned when it is no longer needed.



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Are there any risks?

Occasionally you may experience redness, slight pain or tenderness at the site where the cannula is placed.

Sometimes there may be some leakage of fluid at the site where the cannula is inserted and very rarely some bleeding or bruising may occur. If you are worried about anything then contact your nurse to talk about it.

How does the pump work?

The syringe pump uses a 9 volt alkaline battery. It is normal for the green light to flash intermittently.

When the pump detects a problem four things occur:

- The infusion stops
- An audible alarm is activated
- A message appears on the display screen indicating the cause of the alarm
- The green light changes to red

If this should happen call your nurse immediately. Remember to specify your call is about a **Syringe Pump**.

Community Nurse: 08:00am – 10:00pm Tel: 01793 646436
10:00pm – 08:00am Tel: 111

From 1st January 2019 smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net

Document Control

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