

PALLIATIVE MEDS INFO NEWSLETTER

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The Palliative Meds Info Service is a medicines information service which provides advice by telephone and email on all aspects of medicines use in palliative care. Contact us at Our Lady's Hospice and Care Services on 01 4912578 or email palliativemedsinfolh.ie We also provide medicines information on our webpages which are available from the OLH&CS website www.olh.ie.



The highlights of this newsletter include a focus on wound care and the evidence to support the use of topical preparations in palliative care. An updated version of the OLH&CS Opioid Conversion Chart is now available. Other updates to documents that are currently available on the Palliative Meds Info webpages are highlighted below. Enjoy!

Wound Care

- **What is the evidence to support the use of topical morphine?**

The published studies and case reports available for the efficacy of topical morphine providing adequate analgesia for cutaneous lesions are conflicting. Topical morphine appears to be most effective when used on chronic, open, clean and moist wounds. Morphine does not penetrate intact human skin readily and therefore is only effective on open wounds. The full enquiry is available from our webpages. [What is the evidence for the use of morphine solution for injection mixed in gel and applied topically?](#)



- **What is the guidance to support the use of topical sucralfate on wounds?**

Topical sucralfate preparations are not currently available in Ireland. It is generally prepared as an extemporaneous preparation by pharmacists. It has been used to treat different types of epithelial wounds caused by inflammation, infections, vascular occlusion, and physical damage. Sucralfate has also been suggested as a treatment option for surface bleeding. The full enquiry is available on our webpages. [What is the guidance to support the use of topical sucralfate on wounds?](#)

- **What is the evidence to support the use of the Lidocaine and Lutrol™ preparation?**

Lidocaine 2% in Lutrol F127 24% gel™ is manufactured by Guys and St Thomas Hospital in the UK. Lutrol F127 is a thickening and gelling agent with unusual properties. It is a clear colourless gel that becomes runny when cooled (in the fridge) but sets quickly at room temperature. Lidocaine in Lutrol™ gel is indicated for use on tumours around the vaginal area and on sacral and other painful sores. It can take several days to source from London and can be costly, particularly for patients in the community. The full enquiry is available from our webpages. [What is the evidence to support the use of the Lidocaine in Lutrol™ preparation on wounds?](#)

- **What is the guidance to support the use of adrenaline “soaks” on wounds?**

The use of adrenaline solution 1mg/ml (1:1000) soaked in gauze and applied with pressure to a localised area has been reported for the treatment of surface bleeding. The use of adrenaline in this manner is unlicensed, however there is some limited information available to support its use. The full enquiry is available on our webpages. [What is the guidance to support the use of adrenaline “soaks” on wounds?](#)

- **What is the guidance available to support the topical administration of crushed metronidazole tablets?** There is limited information available regarding crushing metronidazole tablets and applying them to the wound or mixing them in a gel for topical application.

The full enquiry is available on our webpages [What is the guidance available to support the topical administration of crushed metronidazole tablets?](#)

What is the evidence to support the use of nebulised lidocaine to treat an intractable cough?

The use of nebulised lidocaine is largely anecdotal, but case reports have been published. Nebulised local anaesthetics have been used as antitussives in patients with cough caused by cancer. They possibly act locally by inhibiting the sensory nerves in the airways involved in the cough reflex but there could be a central effect as well. However, their use has not been formally evaluated; thus they should be considered only when other avenues have failed. Lidocaine nebulised solutions vary in concentrations from 1-4%. The full enquiry is available on our webpages [What is the evidence to support the use of nebulised lidocaine to treat an intractable cough?](#)

Updates

The following documents have been updated on the the Palliative Meds Info webpages.

- **The OLH&CS Opioid Conversion Chart**

An updated version of the Opioid Conversion Chart has recently been approved for use. The updated version of the chart highlights that the conversions outlined are approximate only. The updated version includes reference to the 2:1 conversion ratio between morphine and oxycodone. The preparations and strengths of oxycodone available have been listed to aid the prescribing of an appropriate oxycodone formulation. The doses of alfentanil in the table have been rounded to the nearest whole number or the nearest first decimal point. Please click here for the updated version of [the OLH&CS Opioid Conversion Chart](#).

- **Methadone: From Hospital to Home**

The section for community pharmacists has been amended. For patients with a GMS card, the methadone prescription should be claimed under the Methadone Scheme. For patients with a DPS card, claims should be made under the Drugs Payment Scheme. Please click on the following link to receive a copy of the updated version of [Methadone: From Hospital to Home](#).

- **Information Sheet: Opioid Transdermal Patches**

The information sheet has been reformatted. It has been updated to include new preparations of fentanyl transdermal patches that have become available in Ireland over the last few months. The document is available from [Transdermal Opioid Patches: Quick Reference Guide](#).

Disposal of fentanyl transdermal patches. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the US recently updated advice recommending disposing of used fentanyl transdermal patches by folding them in half with the sticky sides together, and then flushing them down a toilet. We took a look at the recommendations currently available for the disposal of fentanyl transdermal patches. [Click here](#).