# PALLIATIVE MEDS INFO NEWSLETTER

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Palliative Meds Info is a medicines information service which provides advice on all aspects of medicines use in palliative care. Contact us at Our Lady's Hospice and Care Services on 01 4912578 or email palliativemedsinfo@olh.ie or view the Palliative



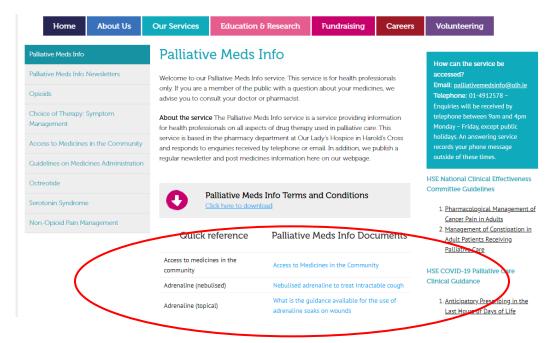


Meds Info webpage available from the OLH&CS website www.olh.ie

#### Website update

In order to make our website more user friendly, we have recently added a table of contents with links to all our documents on the homepage. The quick reference is listed in alphabetical order. The "Ctrl F" function can also facilitate searching for a particular document. Any feedback would be much appreciated.

https://olh.ie/our-services/palliative-care/palliative-meds-info/



## New documents recently added to website

- Benzodiazepines via the buccal or sublingual routes in palliative care
- The use of oral morphine in palliative care
- Oramorph® (morphine sulphate) for breathlessness: Patient Information Leaflet
- Risk of seizures in anti-emetics/anti-secretory agents

Palliative Meds Info | Our Lady's Hospice and Care Services. | Phone 01 4912578 | Email: palliativemedsinfo@olh.ie

#### **Documents recently updated on the website**

- What are the treatment options for the management of dry mouth
- Can pilocarpine eye drops be used to treat a dry mouth
- The Use of Fentanyl in a Syringe Pump in Palliative Medicine
- Sodium Valproate in a syringe pump

## Oral care for patients with palliative care needs

Oral care is an essential component in the care of patients with palliative care needs. Symptoms such as sore, dry or inflamed mouths can cause considerable patient distress and affect everything from speech to confidence and appetite. We have recently revised our Palliative Meds Info documents on The Treatment of Dry Mouth, The Treatment of Painful Mouth and on The Use of Pilocarpine



Eyedrops in Palliative Medicine (links above). Of significance, where saliva substitutes were previously recommended by specialist palliative care reference sources for the primary management of dry mouth, saliva stimulants such as pilocarpine are now favoured in the majority of patients. To learn more, visit our website to download the relevant documents.

## The use of fentanyl via continuous subcutaneous infusion (CSCI)

Though rarely used in Our Lady's Hospice, patients may be on fentanyl via CSCI in the community setting, or when admitted to hospice care from the acute setting.

Often, fentanyl is prescribed to patients who are renally compromised. To learn more, visit our website to download the relevant document.



## Management of palliative patients in the community

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of documents were produced to aid in the management of palliative care patients in the community by general practitioners, including the use of oral morphine in palliative care and the use of benzodiazepines via the buccal or sublingual route. To learn more, visit our website to download the relevant documents.

# Sodium Valproate in a Syringe Pump

Updated guidance is now available on the website. Of significance, the document now contains a suggested dosing regime where patients have not been on sodium valproate before. To learn more, visit our website to download the relevant document.

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#### **Possible errors in Palliative Care Medicines dispensing**

There have been a number of medication dispensing errors reported to have occurred in the community following the receipt of palliative care prescriptions. T he following table highlights some common errors and easy to confuse medications:

Rapifen®: contains 500 micrograms (0.5	Rapifen® Intensive Care: contains 5 milligrams of
milligrams) of alfentanil per milliliter	alfentanil per milliliter
(Generally prescribed where doses of alfentanil	(Generally prescribed only where very high doses
are ≤20mg over 24 hours)	of alfentanil are being used)
Serenace® 500 microgram tablets: contains	Serenace® 5mg tablets: contains 5 milligrams of
0.5 milligrams of haloperidol	haloperidol
(Typical dose prescribed in palliative care)	(Dose more typical in psychiatric medicine)
Oxynorm® 1mg/1mL Oral Solution: contains	Oxynorm Concentrate® 10mg/mL Oral Solution:
1mg of oxycodone in every milliliter	contains 10mg of oxycodone in every millilites
Methadone 1mg/mL Oral Solution: contains	Methadone Concentrate 10mg/mL (special from
1mg of methadone in every milliliter	Pinewood Pharmaceuticals) Oral Solution:
	contains 10mg of methadone in every milliliter
	(May be used in patients receiving large doses of
	methadone for pain or where swallow is an issue)
Oxynorm® capsules: immediate release	Oxycontin® tablets: modified release preparation
preparation	
Palladone® capsules: immediate release	Palladone® SR capsules: modified release
preparation	preparation

- Patients/carers must always be counselled where a new/alternative product strength is being used to avoid the risk of an over- / under- dose
- Prescribe specific brand of opioid required e.g. Oxynorm® and seek clarification where unclear
- Always state strength and formulation of product required e.g. 1mg/1mL oral solution and state dose clearly in milligrams on prescription. Seek clarification where unclear