

Opioid substitution treatment pathway: for patients no longer able to take oral maintenance methadone in last days/weeks of life.

NB Keep maintenance methadone completely separate from analgesics
For advice see Anticipatory Drugs and Syringe Driver Chart for contact numbers

Pain control

- Treat patient's pain as if not taking any opioids (which includes methadone)

Unable to swallow oral opioids for pain control in last days/weeks of life

- Syringe driver is required for subcutaneous opioids
 - See conversion chart
- **Separate syringe driver charts** for pain and symptom control
- **Anticipatory drugs**
 - Keep in safe repository

Methadone maintenance

- Usual oral methadone dose

Unable to swallow oral methadone in last days/weeks of life

- Switch to subcutaneous (sc) methadone
- **Calculation**
Half oral methadone dose to get sc dose
e.g. **oral** methadone 40mg **divide by 2**
= 20mg methadone **sc** over 24hours)
- **Diluent is 0.9% sodium chloride**
- **Separate** syringe driver chart for subcutaneous methadone prescription
- Inform York Drug and Alcohol Service (Changing Lives) or North Yorkshire Horizons to stop oral methadone prescription

Practicalities for injectable methadone, opioids and anticipatory drugs

- **Safekeeping, storage and governance of CDs**
- **Access of drugs**
- **Prescriber**
- **Education for healthcare professional**
 - See local policies for your area

Where to access injectable methadone?

- Community pharmacy
 - methadone and anticipatory drugs (ring palliative care for named pharmacies)
- **NB Harrogate methadone unlikely to be held as stock so allow sufficient time for ordering**
- *Hospital pharmacy (for emergency access)

When a patient dies

- When patient dies inform
- York Drug and Alcohol Service (Changing Lives) or
 - North Yorkshire Horizons

Safekeeping, storage and governance of injectable methadone/opioids

- **Patient's home**
 - safe repository/ locked box
- **Organisation** Spectrum Tel Nos
 - York Drug and Alcohol Service (Changing Lives) No 01904 464680
 - North Yorkshire Horizons No 01723 330730
- **Safe required-** for injectable medication
- Injectable medication will be managed by community health professionals

Who can prescribe injectable methadone?

Recommend one prescriber for injectable methadone

- Doctors in "Spectrum"
 - NMP can continue a methadone prescription
- Palliative medicine consultants
- Exceptional circumstances
 - contact GP with guidance to aid prescribing

References

- **Clinical guidelines on drug misuse and dependence. UK guidelines on clinical management. Update 2017DoH**
- **Palliative care formulary**
- **PCF 7**
- **Methadone guidelines York Hospitals NHSFT- revising**