



Palliative care

Guidance on managing seizures in
palliative patients

If you have any comments or feedback about this information, please contact:

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If you require this information in an alternative language or format (such as Braille, audiotape or large print), please ask the staff looking after you or your loved one.

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Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is being given to you because the doctors and nurses think your relative may be at risk of a seizure. There are medications that can be prescribed to help prevent further seizures and can be given by a relative or carer at home.

What is a seizure?

A seizure is a sudden loss of normal brain activity. Patients will experience different symptoms dependent on which part of the brain is affected. These vary from brief vacant episodes to more generalised symptoms, such as muscle spasms, shaking, stiffening and loss of consciousness.

What to do if a generalised seizure occurs

- Cushion the patient's head
- Do not restrict their movements
- Remove sharp objects
- Do not move unless in danger
- Stay with them until fully recovered
- Contact a medical professional for further advice

What is oromucosal midazolam?

Oromucosal midazolam is a medication belonging to a group of medications called benzodiazepines. It is for use in patients who are having a “generalised” seizure lasting more than 5

minutes, without any sign of recovering. i.e. they are unresponsive, with stiff or jerking muscles, which may be continuous or stop-start.

The adult dose is **10mg** and is written on the side of the syringe. For further information please refer to the patient information leaflet inside the packaging as there are different formulations of oromucosal midazolam.

NB: The information leaflet will refer to this medication being used in seizures in children however we can reassure you it is appropriate for the use identified in adults .

How should oromucosal midazolam be given?

- Oromucosal midazolam must not be injected. Do not attach a needle to the syringe
- Check the expiry date on the side of the syringe
- Remove the syringe from the outer packaging and ensure any caps are removed from the syringe tip
- Place the tip of the syringe inside the mouth between the cheek and the gum (do not place the syringe or anything else between the person's teeth)
- Give approximately half the dose over 5 seconds on one side of the mouth; followed by the remaining half of the dose over 5 seconds on the opposite side of the mouth.

Are there any common side effects?

Oromucosal midazolam can make people sleepy. On very rare occasions it may cause the patient's breathing to slow. If this occurs seek medical assistance.

Useful information

- Store oromucosal midazolam in its plastic tube at room temperature (not in a fridge), away from bright light & heat and out of reach of children.
- Ensure you take oromucosal midazolam with you if you are going out and inform those you are with. Keep it safely out of sight and reach of others.

How quickly will oromucosal midazolam work?

Oromucosal midazolam takes 5 to 10 minutes to work, and most people will sleep following this. They should remain on their side if possible during this time. You do not have to call an ambulance following a seizure, however, if you are concerned or your relative has a further seizure please discuss with your GP, community nurse or specialist team.

What if it doesn't work?

You should have a plan in place with the GP and community nursing team for if the oromucosal midazolam doesn't stop the seizure.

For some patients, it may be appropriate to call 999 for them to be admitted to hospital for further treatment. For some patients, it may be appropriate to contact the community nursing team for administration of subcutaneous medication via injection. Please ensure you ask the team to document the plan in this leaflet.

We recognise that this situation may be frightening and things may happen quickly

If you need help or support, the following contacts may be useful:

Community Nursing Team *(specify contact number)*

Tel:.....

GP *(add usual GP number)*

Tel:.....

Out of Hours GP: 111

Community Palliative Care *(if involved)*

Tel:.....

REMEMBER...

If you cannot get through to anybody else and require urgent advice ring 999

Further information can be found at:

www.hdft.nhs.uk/services/palliative-care/