

Anticipatory Medicines

Information for you about anticipatory or 'just in case' medications.



What are anticipatory medicines?

Anticipatory medicines (sometimes called 'just in case' medications) are a small supply of medications for you to keep at home just in case you need them.

A doctor or nurse will give you a supply of anticipatory medicines that can be given by injection, which may include the following:

- Morphine
- Hyoscine Butylbromide
- Midazolam
- Levomepromazine

The medicines will come with some information for the Doctors and Nurses and a medicine administration sheet which authorises your District Nurse to give you the medicines if you need them.

What are the benefits of having anticipatory medicines?

The benefit of having a supply of these medicines is that they can be used to promptly manage symptoms whenever they occur.

It can be difficult to get these medicines in a hurry, especially at night or at weekends so it is helpful to have them ready.

These medications are supplied as injections.

The medications chosen and dose prescribed will be tailored to your needs but the medications supplied may include:

- Morphine which reduces pain and shortness of breath.
- Levomepromazine which reduces the feeling of sickness, vomiting or agitation.
- Hyoscine Butylbromide which reduces secretions in the throat or chest.
- Midazolam which helps with restlessness.

What are the risks of these medicines?

All medications can have side effects. The possible side effects of the anticipatory medicines will vary depending on your condition and other medications you may be taking at the time, but may include drowsiness, nausea and dry mouth.

If these medicines need to be used, your doctor or nurse will discuss possible side effects with you and those caring for you.

Are there any alternatives to these medicines?

If you are able to take tablets or liquid medicines you may be offered the medicines in this form instead of having them as injections.

Who will give these medicines?

You cannot take these medicines yourself; they can only be given by a doctor or nurse.

Storage of anticipatory medicines

These medicines should be stored in their original boxes at room temperature. Make sure they are in a safe, secure place, out of the sight and reach of children.

It is very important that you do not give these medicines to anyone else; they have been prescribed only for you. When you no longer need to keep anticipatory medicines they should be taken to your local pharmacy for safe disposal.

