

Useful contact details

Palliative Care Team, Lister Hospital	☎ 01438 284035
Pharmacy Dispensary, Lister Hospital	☎ 01438 285510
Switchboard, Lister Hospital	☎ 01438 314333

24 Hour Palliative Care Advice Lines

Area	Organisation	Advice Line number
North Hertfordshire	Garden House Hospice	01462 679540
East Hertfordshire	Isabel Hospice	01707 382575
West Hertfordshire	Michael Sobell House Hospice	02038 262377
Bedfordshire	PEPS	01767 461349

Further Information

NHS Choices - www.nhs.uk

NHS Inform - www.nhsinform.scot

NICE - www.nice.org.uk

References - The information in this leaflet is based on NICE¹ recommendations and NHS Inform guidance.

¹National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk

You can request this information in a different format or another language.

Date of publication: May 2018

Author: Dr Dee Traue

Reference:

Version: 1

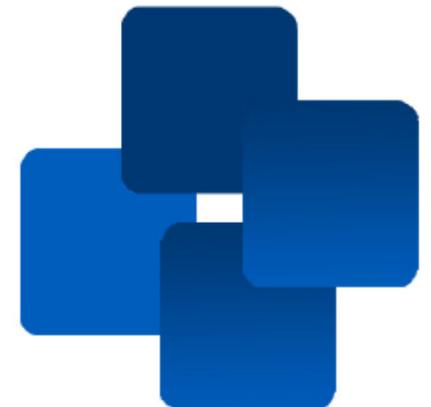
Review Date: May 2021

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Patient Information

Anticipatory Medications

Palliative Care Team



What are anticipatory medications?

Anticipatory medications are also known as “Just in case” medications.

People with serious and life-limiting illnesses may experience sudden unpredictable changes in their health. Sometimes it can be difficult to get the medicines you need in a hurry, especially at night or at weekends, so you have been provided with a small supply of injectable medicines to be kept in your home. Most patients will never need to use these medicines, but find it reassuring to have them “just in case”.

When you have symptoms, your usual oral medicines (e.g. painkillers) should be tried first to see if this helps. If these do not help, you or your carer should phone your GP, community nurse or the out of hours Community Nursing Service for advice. In some situations they may recommend the use of your anticipatory medicines.

What are the medicines for?

The medicines are used to treat symptoms that may occur when people become less well. The drugs given to you will have been chosen by your doctor to meet your particular needs. Some medications can be used for more than one symptom. For example:

Symptom	Example medications
Pain	Morphine, oxycodone, fentanyl
Breathlessness	Morphine, midazolam
Nausea (sickness) and vomiting	Cyclizine, haloperidol
Anxiety or agitation	Midazolam, haloperidol
Noisy respiratory (chest) secretions	Glycopyrronium

If any of these medicines are needed at any stage, your healthcare professional will explain their usage and obtain your consent prior to administration

When should I take my anticipatory medicines?

These medications should only be used on the advice of a healthcare professional who is involved in your care, i.e. your GP, district nurse, or community palliative care nurse.

How are the medications given and who does this?

The medications are given as an injection under the skin (subcutaneous route) and only a trained healthcare professional can do this. This route is used when it is difficult for you to take medications by mouth, for example, if you are vomiting or very drowsy.

Sometimes, if your community healthcare professionals do not think single injections are to be sufficient, the anticipatory medicines may be given constantly as an infusion using a small battery operated pump.

How do I look after my anticipatory medicines?

- **The medicines have been prescribed for you and should not be given to or taken by anyone else.**
- Keep them in a safe place out of the reach of children or vulnerable adults.
- They do not need to be kept in the fridge but should be kept in a cool and dry place.