

Less Commonly Used For Moderate Pain

Tramadol

Tramadol is an analgesic prescribed for moderate pain. Tramadol is available as a 50mg capsule. Your doctor will have prescribed tramadol at a dose of:

- 1-2 capsules (50 to 100mg) FOUR times a day *when required.*

Maximum of 8 capsules (400mg) in a 24 hour period or 6 capsules (300mg) in a 24 hour period if you are above 75 years of age.

Before taking this medication it is important to let your doctor or pharmacist know if you

- have a history of seizures (fits)
- are pregnant or breastfeeding

SIDE EFFECTS: Nausea, constipation, stomach upset, drowsiness, fitting and sweating

DRUG INTERACTIONS**: antidepressants, warfarin, alcohol, St John's Wort

** This is not the complete list of drug interactions. Please inform your doctor or pharmacist of ALL the medications that you are currently taking

Prevention of Constipation

- Ensure you have adequate fluid and fibre intake
- It may also be necessary to start taking some laxatives as soon as you commence the opioid or tramadol medications. This will help to prevent you from becoming constipated. Please ask your doctor or pharmacist which laxatives may be best for you.

AFTER DISCHARGE FROM HOSPITAL:

Once your pain starts to subside, and you do not need to take extra doses of the short acting opioid preparations such as Endone®, you may reduce the amount of pain medication you take until you no longer need the medication.

On discussion with your pharmacist or doctor and unless otherwise advised, you may:

- Reduce or cease any slow release oral opiate formulations eg Oxycontin® or MS Contin®. (Remember: Do not halve or crush these slow release medications)

THEN

- Cease any short acting opiate preparations such as Endone®
- Finally cease non-opiates such as tramadol, naproxen, and paracetamol

If however your pain gets worse on discharge or your pain relief medication is no longer controlling your pain, please contact your local GP or return to the Emergency Department.

THIS leaflet is intended as a guide only, if you need further information please contact the Drug Information Service at the Alfred or contact your local doctor.

This leaflet has been endorsed by the Pain Services and Anaesthetics Department, Bayside Health

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Analgesia (Pain-Relievers)

This leaflet is designed to give you some information on the analgesic medications (pain-relievers) you have been prescribed. Your doctor may want you to take a combination of these medications to help keep your pain under control.

Your doctor has prescribed: (PLEASE TICK)

MILD TO MODERATE PAIN

- Paracetamol (Panamax®, Febridol®, Dymadon P®)
- Naproxen (Naprosyn®, Inza®, Proxen®, Naprogesic®)
- Tramadol (Tramal®, Zydol®)

MODERATE TO SEVERE PAIN

- Oxycodone (Endone®)
- Oxycodone (OxyContin®)
- Morphine (MS Contin®)

It is important that you take these pain-relief medications as your doctor has directed

For Mild to Moderate Pain

Paracetamol

Paracetamol is an effective analgesic (pain-reliever) used for mild to moderate pain. Your doctor will have prescribed paracetamol (500mg) tablets at a dose of either;

- 1-2 tablets FOUR times a day *when required* or
- 1-2 tablets FOUR times a day *regularly*

MAXIMUM OF 8 PARACETAMOL CONTAINING TABLETS (4g) PER 24 HOURS

There are many products available that contain paracetamol. These include;

- Panamax®
- Panadol®
- Febridol®
- Dymadon P®
- Panadeine Forte®
- Many cold and flu preparations (these may contain different strengths of paracetamol)

If you are unsure if a product contains paracetamol, ask your pharmacist. To avoid liver damage it is important that you do not take more than 8 tablets containing paracetamol (4g) in 24 hours.

PREGNANCY & BREASTFEEDING: paracetamol is safe to use in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

SIDE EFFECTS: no common side effects when used correctly.

DRUG INTERACTIONS: if you are taking paracetamol regularly, together with warfarin, there may be an interaction. It is important to let your doctor know that you are on this combination.

NSAIDs

NSAIDs are non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs which are used to control pain due to inflammation and swelling. There are many different types of NSAIDs. The one that has been prescribed for you is naproxen (Naprosyn®, Inza®, Proxen®, Naprogesic®) at a dose of:

- 1 tablet (250 mg) THREE times a day *regularly* or *when required*. These tablets should be taken WITH FOOD.

Before taking this medication it is important to let your doctor or pharmacist know if you:

- have a history of stomach ulcers
- previous allergy to any NSAIDs
- have a history of asthma; or asthma which is worsened by NSAIDs
- are pregnant or breastfeeding
- are taking blood thinning medication such as warfarin
- have poor kidney function
- have a history of heart failure
- if you are taking any other NSAIDs such as aspirin, (Disprin®, Solprin®), ibuprofen (Brufen®, Rafen® Nurofen®), indomethacin (Indocid®), piroxicam (Mobic®) or diclofenac (Diclohexal®, Voltaren®). Note: This is not a complete list of NSAIDs so please discuss which other NSAIDs you may be taking with your pharmacist or doctor.

SIDE EFFECTS: commonly - indigestion, dizziness, nausea, diarrhoea and stomach ache.

If you experience side effects such as: blackened stools, blood in vomit, skin rash, difficulty breathing or fluid retention (swollen ankles), contact your doctor immediately as these symptoms need urgent assistance.

DRUG INTERACTIONS:** blood thinning medications (eg warfarin) and blood pressure lowering medications.

** This is not the complete list of drug interactions. Please inform your doctor or pharmacist of ALL the medications that you are currently taking

For Moderate to Severe Pain

Opioids

Opioids are only to be used for moderate to severe pain. There are different types of opioids that you may be prescribed including:

OXYCODONE: Either as Endone® or OxyContin®

Endone® is a *immediate-release* product which means that the tablet releases the medication (oxycodone) into your body at the one time. The usual dose:

- 1-2 tablets (5-10mg) every 4 to 6 hours *when required* for breakthrough pain (pain not controlled by your other pain-relievers).

OxyContin® is a *controlled-release* product which means that the tablet gradually releases the medication (oxycodone) into your body. The usual dose:

- 1 tablet (.....mg) TWICE a day REGULARLY (every 12 hours). Each tablet should be swallowed whole and not chewed or crushed.

MORPHINE SULPHATE: As MS Contin®

MS Contin® is a *controlled-release* product which means that the tablet gradually releases the medication (morphine) into your body. The usual dose is:

- 1 tablet (.....mg) TWICE a day REGULARLY (every 12 hours). Each tablet should be swallowed whole and not chewed or crushed

N.B. **OxyContin®** and **MS Contin®** are available in different strengths. Always check what strength you have been prescribed

FOR OPIOIDS in general:

Before taking these medications it is important to let your doctor or pharmacist know if you:

- have any allergies to opioids
- are pregnant or breastfeeding
- suffer from seizures (fits), have a head injury

SIDE EFFECTS: nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, confusion and skin rash.

Constipation is very common with opioids and it is important that you know how you can prevent this (see overleaf).

Drowsiness can occur with opioids. If affected, do not drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery.

DRUG INTERACTIONS:** sedatives, alcohol and antidepressants.