

Managing your child's pain with morphine (continuous infusion)

Children's Hospital

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Information for Patients, Parents & Carers

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What is a continuous morphine infusion?

We know that coming into hospital is an anxious time for you and your child. You may also have the added concern that your child may be in pain. The pain may be due to their medical condition or after surgery.

An infusion through a vein is a way of delivering medicine directly into your child's bloodstream. This allows the medicine to get into your child's system much quicker.

Morphine is a drug which can be used for pain relief. A continuous morphine infusion allows the drug to be given continuously over a period of time, and is one of the methods used for managing children's pain.

Why is my child being given morphine?

Morphine is a strong painkiller which is used for moderate to severe pain. A continuous morphine infusion is offered to children who need strong regular pain relief after surgery or for a medical condition, to help keep them comfortable.

The amount of morphine given to your child is worked out carefully according to their age and weight and diluted with saline (salty water) in a syringe. Morphine is not addictive when given for pain relief over a short period of time. The nurse will be checking your child regularly whilst they are on the infusion.

How does it work?

Your child will have a thin plastic tube called a cannula inserted into a vein in their arm, hand or foot either when they are on the ward or in theatre. This is then connected to a special locked pump via some tubing.

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The pump is programmed to a prescription suitable for your child's age and weight and it will run until it is no longer needed. They will not feel the morphine being given.

The pump is programmed to make sure that your child is not given too much of the pain relief medicine.

How do we know it is working?

Whilst your child is on a morphine infusion they will be closely checked. They will have a small 'peg' or 'plaster' attached to 1 of their fingers or toes to monitor their heart rate and the amount of oxygen in their blood (this will not hurt). The nurse will also check their breathing, pain level and any side effects (see below).

The nurse will carry out assessments to monitor and record your child's pain.

During the morphine infusion your child will be given other pain relief at the same time e.g. paracetamol and ibuprofen. Research shows that if a child is given additional pain relief that work in different ways, they can manage pain a lot better.

Are there any side effects?

Whilst on the morphine infusion your child may feel:

- sleepy
- itchy
- sick (nausea) or be sick (vomit)

The nurse will regularly check if your child is having any side effects and will give other medicines to help with these if needed.

When will the morphine be stopped?

This will depend on your child's pain levels, what type of surgery they have had and/ or their medical condition. The morphine will be gradually weaned off as their pain improves. It will be stopped sooner if we are unable to effectively manage any side effects. If this happens, different pain relieving medicines will be given.

Once the morphine infusion has stopped your child will continue to have other medicines for pain relief such as paracetamol and ibuprofen.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
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