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

Children's Hospital

Information for Patients

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## What is a continuous morphine infusion?

We know that coming into hospital can be a worrying time for you and your child. You may be worried that your child is in pain. The pain may be because of their medical condition or after surgery.

Having an infusion through a vein is a way of giving medicine directly into your child's bloodstream. This lets the medicine 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. This is 1 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. We offer a continuous morphine infusion to children who need strong regular pain relief after surgery or for a medical condition. This helps them to stay comfortable.

The amount of morphine given to your child is worked out carefully using your child's 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. We do this when they are on the ward or in theatre. This is then connected to a special locked pump through some tubing.

The pump is programmed to a prescription suitable for your child's age and weight. It will run until it is no longer needed. Your child will not feel the morphine being given to them. 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. This is used 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 for example, 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. They 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 slowly weaned off as their pain improves. It will be stopped sooner if we cannot effectively manage any side effects. If this happens, we will give different pain-relieving medicines.

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

Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice
Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals.
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

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**We are a research hospital and you may be asked to take part in research**


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