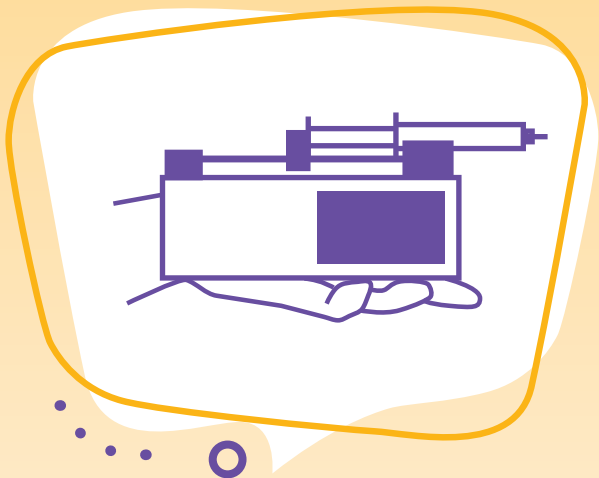


Information about your syringe pump



A guide on what a
syringe pump is,
how it works
and how to care for it.



This leaflet gives information on what a syringe pump is, how it works and how to care for it.

What is a syringe pump?

A syringe pump is a small, battery operated portable pump which allows medicines to be given continuously under the skin over a 24-hour period.

The syringe that is connected to the pump is filled with medicine that has been prescribed by your healthcare team to help your symptoms.

Your medicine will be reviewed on a regular basis and changed if necessary. You do not need to do anything to the syringe pump.

Why do I need one?

A syringe pump is used for several reasons. It is an alternative and more comfortable way to receive medication for people who would otherwise need repeated injections.

A syringe pump may be used in any of the following circumstances (not all of these will apply to you):

- you are having difficulty swallowing medicines
- you are being sick, or your healthcare team thinks you are not absorbing oral medication
- your symptoms aren't well managed with oral medicine

The reason for recommending that your medicine is delivered via a syringe pump will be explained to you by the healthcare team looking after you.

A syringe pump may be used at any stage of your illness and may be discontinued if it is no longer needed.

If you have concerns or wish for the syringe pump to be stopped then please discuss this with the community nurse / general practitioner (GP) or the Hospice.

Sometimes you may have more than one syringe pump. This might be because you are taking a large number of medicines. It might also be because some medicines can't be mixed together.

Some people worry that starting a syringe pump may speed up the dying process. This is absolutely not the case.

The syringe pump is there to deliver medication at appropriate doses to ensure your symptoms are well managed and will neither speed up nor delay the dying process.

How will the syringe pump be connected to me?

A long thin tube is attached to a syringe containing medicine and connected to you by inserting a tiny needle underneath your skin in the upper chest, upper arm, thigh, abdomen or top of your back.



The needle is then removed, leaving a small plastic tube in its place. A clear dressing is placed over the plastic tube to keep it clean and dry. Once this is in place you should not feel it and it can stay there for several days.

How does the syringe pump work?

The syringe pump gradually pushes the syringe plunger to deliver the medicine over 24 hours. If you are at home the community nurses will renew the medicine in the syringe every 24 hours, in the Hospice the Inpatient Unit nurses will do this.

Can I have a syringe pump at home?

Yes. Normally your GP will prescribe medication for the pump at home and the community nurses will look after it.

The medication should be kept in a safe place and out of reach from children. Syringe pumps are often placed in a clear plastic, locked box. This protects the pump from being damaged or knocked. There will also be a keypad lock on the pump itself which means the settings can't be changed accidentally. You are able to walk around with your syringe pump. People often put their syringe pump in a bag which they can carry on their shoulder for ease.

If you are worried about your pump or have any questions, please contact either your community nurse / GP or the Hospice.

Who will look after the syringe?

In the Hospice / hospital, the nurse looking after you will check the pump is working correctly. If you are at home, the community nurse will visit daily to check and replenish the pump.

How do I know if the syringe pump is working properly?

The syringe pump will always be thoroughly checked before use.

A small light above the 'ON / OFF' button will flash green regularly and the syringe pump display will say 'pump delivering'.

What do I do if the pump beeps or an alarm sounds?

If the light turns red, the pump is alarming or there is an error message on the display screen there could be a problem with the pump.

The medicines will keep working for a while but you should inform your nurse / doctor as soon as possible. They will be able to advise on what to do.

What to do

- When you are in bed or resting in a chair, the syringe pump can be put on a flat surface next to you. Do not place the syringe pump at a higher level than the needle or tube.
- If you need a bath or shower, your nurse will give you advice on what to do.

What NOT to do

- Do not interfere with the line or pump.
- Do not press the buttons on the pump control panel.
- Do not get the syringe pump wet.
- Do not drop the syringe pump.
- Do not expose the syringe pump to heat or bright sunlight.

In the event of any of these situations happening, please contact your nurse or doctor as soon as possible.

Also, please contact your nurse or doctor if:

- You are worried that the syringe pump is not working properly, or it has been damaged.
- The colour of the medicine in the syringe has changed or become cloudy.
- The skin around the plastic tube entry site is red, swollen or painful.
- The alarm sounds.
- You do not feel your symptoms are well managed.
- You have any concerns.



**For further
assistance
and advice**

Contact us

If you would like more advice or support
please contact St Raphael's Hospice
on **020 8099 7777**

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