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Patient Syringe Driver Information Leaflet

What Is A Syringe Driver?

A syringe driver is a small portable battery-operated device. The device is attached to a syringe, which gives you medication continuously (over 24 hours) through a small needle under the skin. The syringe driver is small enough to be carried in a pouch/bag, a shoulder holster or large pocket.

Image Source: http://www.northlondonhospice.org

Why Do I Need One?

Sometimes it is easier for you to have some of your medications this way. There are several reasons why you might have a syringe driver:

- If you are finding it difficult to swallow medication
- If you are feeling sick and/or vomiting frequently and you are unable to keep tablets in the stomach long enough for them to work
- If you are struggling with the amount of tables that you need to take
- If your symptoms are difficult to control with tablets alone

Instead of having repeated injections the syringe driver can provide a simpler more comfortable way to receive medication continuously. Starting a syringe driver doesn't mean that your medications have stopped working or aren't strong enough, only that this is a more effective way of getting the medications in to the body.

Syringe drivers can be used across all care settings e.g. hospital, hospice and at home and can be used at any point during your illness.

Using a Syringe Driver

The syringe is attached to a thin piece of tubing that has a fine needle attached to the end. The nurse will insert the needle just under the skin on your chest, tummy, upper arm or leg and will secure it in place with a clear dressing. Once the needle is in place it can stay in place for a number of days. The nurses looking after you will refill the syringe in syringe driver every day. If you are at home, the district nurses will attend your home to do this. At the same time the nurses will:

- Check the pump is working properly
- Check the needle site
- Review your symptoms
- Replace the needle every few days

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How Long Will I Need The Syringe Driver For?

You may only need it for a couple of days / weeks. Your symptoms and the need for a syringe driver will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Some Do's And Don'ts

Do

- Tell the nurse if your skin is red or sore where the needle is in place
- Tell the nurse if the needle comes out, the alarm is sounding or if you have any concerns regarding the syringe driver medication
- Keep all medication in a safe place away from children preferably in a locked cupboard
- Keep the syringe contents out of direct sunlight

Don't

- Immerse the syringe driver in water. You can have a bath or shower but keep the needle site dry and keep the machine out of water by placing on a nearby stool/table. Your nurse can give you advice on this
- Do not attempt to change the settings on the syringe driver or press the buttons
- Do not drop the syringe driver
- Do not place the syringe driver at a higher level than the needle/tubing

In the event of any of these happening please contact the nurse in charge of your care / district nurses

How Will I Know The Syringe Driver Is Working?

The nurse will check the syringe driver at least daily to ensure it is working. A small light above the ON/OFF button will flash green regularly. If it turns red you should inform the nurse in charge of your care / district nurses as soon as possible. There is an alarm on the syringe that will beep if there is a problem. The alarm usually beeps for two reasons:

- Blockage of flow of medication caused by a kink in the tubing
- The syringe is empty. If the alarm sounds contact the nurse in charge / district nurses.

If you have any queries or concerns please phone:

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust
Mon – Fri 9am to 5pm.
0151 708 9988 Ext 4334 tr speak to the Rapid Access Clinic Trackers
Or
Speak to the nursing staff in the Emergency Room on 0151 702 4140
Or
Telephone your GP

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This leaflet can be made available in difference formats on request. If you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at pals@lwh.nhs.uk

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