



Palliative and End of Life Care  
RESEARCH EDUCATION INFLUENCING PRACTICE

CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE



Being there for *you*  
and *your family*

University Hospitals of Leicester and  
Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trusts

# Anticipatory or 'just-in-case' medicines in the home

## Information for patients, family and friends

If you have any  
questions or concerns  
and need to speak with a  
specialist, please contact the  
Single Point of Access:

**0300 300 7777**

(open 7.30am - 9.30pm every day)

[www.leicspart.nhs.uk](http://www.leicspart.nhs.uk)

Email: [info@loros.co.uk](mailto:info@loros.co.uk)

This leaflet aims to answer common questions that arise when anticipatory or 'just-in-case' medicines are given to patients to have at home. If you would like further information, or have any particular worries, please do not hesitate to ask your nurse or doctor.

## What are anticipatory medicines?

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Anticipatory medicines are a small supply of injectable medicines for you to keep at home just in case you have problems in swallowing and may need them for pain or other symptoms. The names of the common medicines are listed below in Box 1.

## Why might I need them?

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Having injectable medicines ready in case you need them is good practice and most people find this reassuring. Some people never need them but we know that many people find it difficult to swallow medicines as they become less well so having them there in injection form is really important to keep on top of problems.

## I'm worried that it means I am more ill than I thought?

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Having these medicines can raise worries for some people about how their illness is changing. Having the medicines doesn't mean things are worse than you have been told but do discuss this with your doctor or nurse if this worries you.

## What are they used for?

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These medicines are only used to control symptoms such as pain when you are unable to swallow your usual medicines (see Box 1 for more information). Some people are concerned that they are used to hasten things or cause death. This is not the case.

## Box 1: Symptoms and the names of medicine that are commonly used

Pain	Morphine, Oxycodone
Nausea and/or sickness	Levomepromazine Haloperidol
Noisy breathing due to secretions in the chest or throat	Glycopyrronium
Anxiety or restlessness	Midazolam
Agitation or confusion	Levomepromazine Haloperidol

Any medicines that you are given will be tailored to your needs and will depend on your condition. Sometimes these medicines are called end-of-life medicines because this is when they are most commonly needed.

### How are these medicines given?

These medicines can only be given by a doctor or a nurse. You will be referred to the district nurses, who will provide you with a nursing folder to keep with the medicines. This folder will include the medicine administration and authorisation charts that the nurses will use to record when they have given you any of these medicines. This is to make sure your treatment is effective and safe.

### Safety and storage tips

- Store your medicine in the original box and at room temperature.
- Store your medicines and nursing folder in a safe, secure place - out of the sight and reach of children.
- Tell at least one close family member or friend where these medicines are stored so they can be found if needed.
- Do not share your medicines with anyone else
- Take care of the paper forms that come with these medicines as your nurse or doctor will need this information to give the medicines to you.

## What if I need more medicines?

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If you need to start using the medicines, the nurses will need to keep a check on them and let you or your family know when the supplies are running low. You will need to get a new prescription from the doctor and arrange for someone to collect them from a pharmacy. Some pharmacies will deliver medication if you are unable to collect them. The nurses are unable to collect these medicines for you.

## What should I do with my medicine if it is no longer needed?

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Unused medicines must be taken back to your local community pharmacy. Try and do this as soon as possible. It does not have to be the same pharmacy that the medicines were from originally. The nurses are unable to return medication to the pharmacy for you.

## Who can I speak to if I have more questions?

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If you have any questions about your anticipatory medicines, please talk to your GP, specialist palliative care nurse or your community (district) nurse. You can find further information at this website

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/end-of-life-care/controlling-pain-and-other-symptoms/>.

**If you need help to understand this leaflet or would like it in a different language or format such as large print, Braille or audio, telephone: 0116 231 8435**

## Your feedback

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If you have feedback on this leaflet please email: [info@loros.co.uk](mailto:info@loros.co.uk)