

Respiratory

Oramorph as a treatment for breathlessness for patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

What is Oramorph?

Oramorph is liquid morphine that is taken by mouth. It is normally used to treat pain. There is also evidence that in small doses Oramorph is effective for treating long term breathlessness.

Why have I been prescribed Oramorph?

You have been prescribed Oramorph as you remain breathless despite your other COPD treatments. Oramorph has been used to treat breathlessness for many years and is proven to be effective and safe and should make your breathing easier and more relaxed.

How does it work?

Oramorph works quickly to relieve the feeling of being breathless and help you gain control (recover more quickly).

What do I need to know before I take Oramorph?

Do not take this medication if you are allergic to Oramorph or any of its ingredients (you will find a list of the ingredients in the information leaflet provided with the medication).



Patient Information

Before prescribing Oramorph your specialist doctor or nurse will check your past medical history and current medications to make sure that it is a safe treatment for you. This includes medicines that you buy over the counter including herbal medicines.

What dose will I take?

The strength commonly used for breathlessness is Oramorph 10mg in 5mls. Each 5mls contains 10mg Morphine.

Oramorph can be prescribed in different ways to treat breathlessness and should work within 30 minutes.

Your specialist doctor or nurse will discuss whether you need to take Oramorph:

- Regularly (up to 4 times a day)
- As needed or before activities that may cause breathlessness (up to 4 times a day).

The starting dose is usually 1.25ml/2.5mg once or twice a day as directed. If this seems to help you the dose can be slowly increased as agreed.

A syringe will make it easier for you to measure your Oramorph. Please ask your pharmacist for one.

Are there any side effects?

As with all medications there are side effects but not everyone will experience them

Common side effects include

- Constipation
- Skin itching
- Feeling sleepy (Drowsiness)
- Feeling sick (Nausea)
- Dry mouth

If you are concerned about any possible side effects please discuss it with your GP, nurse or pharmacist.

The leaflet in the package says that you should not take Oramorph if you have breathing problems.

There is only a potential problem if you take very large doses to treat pain. This should not happen in the low doses that we prescribe for treating breathlessness.

Can I become addicted to Oramorph?

The small dose of Oramorph used to treat breathlessness should not cause addiction. The Oramorph dose can be slowly reduced and stopped.

What happens if the Oramorph is not working for me?

If you feel that there is no improvement in your breathing please contact your GP or nurse. Oramorph does not work for everyone.

Other warnings:

- Keep out of the reach of children.
- Oramorph 10 mg/5mls should be used within 90 days of opening.
- Return any unused Oramorph to your pharmacist.

What if I forget to take Oramorph?

- If it is nearly time for the next dose skip the dose. This is because the time between doses should be at least 4 hours.
- Do not take a double dose to make up.

Can I drive if I am taking Oramorph?

If you feel drowsy it is important that you do not drive.

Can I drink alcohol?

Alcohol may make you drowsy so only drink in moderation.

Patient Information

I thought Oramorph was only used when patients are at the end of life.

No. Oramorph can be used to treat breathlessness and improve quality of life.

Further information

If you would like any further information about Oramorph, please contact the person who prescribed it you.

Community COPD service 024 7623 7005

If you want information regarding Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, you can look at UHCW leaflet:

[Community COPD Service \(Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease\) \(PDF\)](#)

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format please contact 024 7623 7005 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

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