

Respiratory

Oramorph for breathlessness in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

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

Why you were 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. It should make your breathing easier and more relaxed.

How Oramorph works to treat breathlessness

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

What you need to know before taking 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 medicine.

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



Patient Information

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
- 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.

If you 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.

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.

Side effects

As with all medicines, there are side effects. Not everyone will experience them. Common side effects include:

- constipation
- skin itching
- feeling sleepy (drowsiness)
- feeling sick (nausea)
- dry mouth

Patient Information

If you are concerned about any possible side effects, talk to 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.

Addiction

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

If the Oramorph is not working

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

Driving

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

Alcohol

Alcohol may make you drowsy. Only drink in moderation.

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.

More information

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

Community COPD service 024 7696 4167

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 4167 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

Patient Information

The Trust operates a smokefree policy.

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