



**University  
Hospitals Sussex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Oral Oxycodone

Patient information

### **Quick-acting or immediate release oxycodone:**

Oxynorm® capsules, Oxynorm® liquid, Lynlor® capsules and others.

### **Long-acting or modified release (12 hourly) oxycodone:**

Longtec® tablets, Oxycontin® tablets and others.

There are different forms of morphine and different brands – check the name of the medicine on the box. Morphine is a strong opioid pain medication.

## **What is oxycodone used for?**

Oxycodone is used for moderate to severe pain. Quick acting oxycodone starts to work after about 30 minutes and usually lasts for about 4 hours. It is used to control breakthrough pain as it works quickly. It may be given in regular doses when your doctor is working out how much oxycodone is needed to control your pain. Long acting oxycodone is used to control on-going pain and is taken regularly, usually every 12 hours.

## **Isn't a pain killer like oxycodone only used for patients who are at the end of life?**

No. Oxycodone is given for different sorts of severe pain and not just pain from cancer or when people near the end of their lives. Treatment with oxycodone may be needed to allow you to continue having as comfortable a life as possible. You will be able to go on taking oxycodone for as long as you need to. The effects do not wear off with time and the dose can be increased if needed.

## When do I take it?

Long acting oxycodone is taken regularly every 12 hours to control pain. When you are at home, take your morning dose when you wake up and the evening dose about 12 hours later. If the pain comes back between your regular doses, you can take a dose of quick acting oxycodone. Wait 60 minutes after taking the extra dose. If you still have severe pain, take a second dose of the quick acting oxycodone. If you need more than 2-3 extra doses of quick acting oxycodone in a day, tell your doctor or nurse as all of your pain medication may need adjusting.

Sometimes when doctors are working out the long acting dose that will be right for you, they will give you more regular quick acting oxycodone (taken every four hours) for a short time. They will explain this fully. Do not stop taking oxycodone suddenly.

## What do I do if I forget to take a dose?

**Long acting:** If you remember within 4 hours of missing your dose, take the dose straight away. If you are more than 4 hours late, please call your doctor or nurse for advice.

**Quick acting:** take a dose as soon as you remember. Do not take a double dose to make up for the missed one. If you are sick and bring up the medicine, repeat the dose as soon as you feel better.

## **Are there any side effects from using oxycodone?**

### **Sleepiness:**

This is most common when you first take oxycodone or when the dose is increased. It should improve after a few days.

### **Constipation:**

This is a very common side effect. It is important to drink plenty of fluids and always take a laxative regularly as prescribed by your doctor. The dose of laxative can be increased or reduced to make sure you pass a soft motion regularly.

### **Sickness:**

If you feel sick when you first start to take oxycodone, try taking it with food. Your doctor may need to give you some anti-sickness medicine for a few days until the sickness goes away.

## **Will I become addicted to oxycodone and unable to stop taking it?**

If you no longer need to take oxycodone, please discuss with your doctor who can provide advice on stopping it gradually.

## **Will oxycodone always relieve my pain completely?**

Although oxycodone is a very good pain killer it is not helpful for all types of pain. Other treatments may be needed and suggested by your doctor or nurse.

## What do I do if I get pain between the regular doses of oxycodone?

If the pain is mild, paracetamol may help. (Do not take more than eight paracetamol tablets in 24 hours, and more than two tablets every four hours). If it is more severe you should take a dose of quick acting oxycodone (see above). If you need more than 2-3 extra doses in a day, tell your doctor or nurse.

Some people find that doing certain things like having a bath or going for a walk brings on the pain. Your doctor or nurse may suggest you try taking a dose of quick acting oxycodone before you start doing something that brings on the pain.

## How will I know if the oxycodone is no longer suitable for me?

You may still have pain despite taking bigger doses of oxycodone and may feel unwell in one or more of these ways:

- more sleepy than usual
- feeling sick more of the time
- restlessness or jumpiness
- bad dreams and/or hallucinations.

Do not worry if this happens. Tell your doctor or nurse. Your doctor may reduce your dose of oxycodone and suggest other treatments to help the pain.

## Can I drive?

Once you get used to taking oxycodone (strong opioid pain relief) and do not feel sleepy or unwell you may be able to drive.

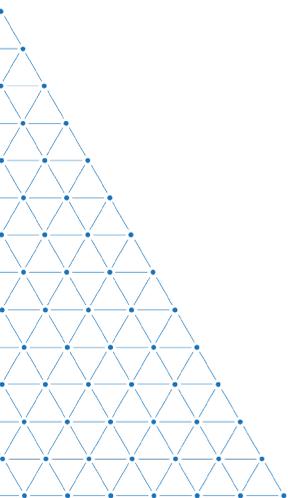
**You must discuss this with your doctor first.** You must not drive if you feel that your driving may be impaired by pain, your condition or medication. Following recent advice from the Department of Transport please carry evidence that you have been prescribed oxycodone (strong opioid pain relief) by a doctor, in case you are stopped by the Police.

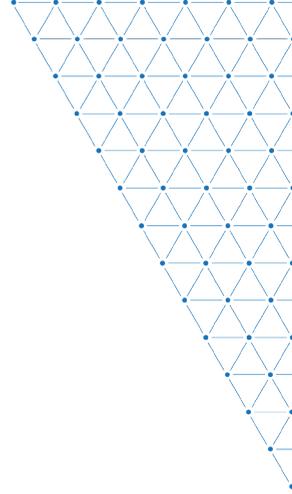
## Can I drink alcohol?

A small glass of wine, beer or a small sherry or whisky is usually permitted, but you should discuss this with your doctor. It is best to avoid more than a small drink otherwise you may become too drowsy.

## Any questions?

If you have any questions about your oxycodone or other medicines, please ask your community nurse, GP or community palliative care nurse, if you have one.





Created by Simon Matthews August-2013

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**This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care  
in Brighton & Hove or Haywards Heath**

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