

# PAIN AT THE END OF LIFE

Is patient already on opioid drugs and unable to tolerate or absorb oral medication?

**YES**

**Patient on Oral Morphine /Oramorph**  
 Divide 24 hour total dose of current oral Morphine by 3 and prescribe this as Diamorphine (mgs) via a syringe pump over 24 hours  
 Prescribe 1/6<sup>th</sup> Diamorphine syringe pump dose for breakthrough/rescue medication to be given hourly if needed  
 Start syringe pump 4 hours before next oral opioid dose would have been due  
**Stop oral opioid dose**

**Review within 24 hours**  
**If extra medication has been needed for pain**  
 Increase syringe pump dose by total amount of rescue Diamorphine given or by 30 to 50% whichever is **less**  
 Adjust rescue/breakthrough medication to 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the syringe pump dose to be given hourly if needed  
**If pain is controlled make NO changes continue to review dose requirements regularly**

**Patient on weak opioid**  
 (e.g. Codeine, Tramadol, Dihydrocodeine)  
**Stop oral weak opioid**  
 Start Diamorphine 10mg/24hrs by syringe pump soon after last oral dose  
 Prescribe Diamorphine 2.5mg sub-cut hourly if needed for rescue/breakthrough pain  
**Review regularly and adjust as above**

**Fentanyl Patch:**  
 Continue patch and supplement with s/c Diamorphine prn. Add in a syringe pump if needed  
**Renal impairment: eGFR<30 Seek advice**

**NO**

**Scenario One: "Planning Ahead"**  
**Patient NOT IN pain**  
 Prescribe Diamorphine 2.5mg Sub-cut hourly if needed  
 If patient later develops pain proceed to next box

**Scenario Two: "Act Now"**  
**Patient IN pain**  
 Give Diamorphine 2.5mg sub-cut stat  
 Prescribe and start Diamorphine 10mg/24hrs by syringe pump  
 Prescribe Diamorphine 2.5mg sub-cut for rescue/breakthrough pain to be given hourly if needed

**Review within 24 hours**  
**If extra medication has been needed for pain**  
 Increase syringe pump dose by total amount of rescue medication given or to 20mg/24hrs whichever is **less**  
 Increase rescue/breakthrough dose of Diamorphine to 5mg sub-cut to be given hourly if needed  
**If pain is controlled make NO changes**

**Review within 24 hours**  
 If extra medication has been needed for pain:  
 Increase syringe pump dose by total amount of rescue Diamorphine given or by 30 to 50% whichever is **less**  
 Adjust rescue/breakthrough dose to 1/6<sup>th</sup> of syringe pump Diamorphine dose to be given hourly if needed  
**If pain is controlled make NO changes continue to review dose requirements regularly**

If symptoms persist or you need help contact the Palliative Care Team or Severn Hospice on Tel: 01743 236 565