

# Medicines Following Surgery

## Patient Information

Specialist Services Pharmacy Department



The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link:  
<https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets> or scan the QR code.

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## Introduction

The purpose of this leaflet is to help you understand some of the medications you may receive following surgery. This information is general, and your treatment plans may differ.

**Always consult the manufacturer's information leaflet for more detailed information.**

**The pharmacy will cross out the medications on each leaflet that do not apply to individual patients.**

## Pain Relief

### Paracetamol

What is it for?	To help control <b>mild</b> pain. Helps control more <b>severe</b> pain when combined with stronger pain relief
How do I take it?	Take ONE or TWO tablets FOUR times daily (every 6 hours). If taken regularly helps prevent pain coming on. <b>Do not take more than 8 tablets in 24 hours.</b>
Common side effects?	Well tolerated. Side effects are rare. Some patients develop a rash.
Other information.	Paracetamol may also be in other pain and cold medicines (e.g. co-codamol, hot lemon powder drinks). <b>Never take more than 1 paracetamol-containing product.</b> Taking too much Paracetamol can cause liver damage.

### Codeine (weaker opioid pain relief)

What is it for?	To help control <b>moderate</b> pain after surgery.
How do I take it?	Check the pharmacy label. Take this up to FOUR times daily (every 6 hours) if needed for pain that's not controlled by paracetamol, or if you are going to do something that brings on pain. This can be used alongside paracetamol.
Common side effects?	Constipation, Drowsiness/Dizziness, Feeling Sick, Confusion, Itching, Dry Mouth.
Other information.	This is a short term medication and should usually not be taken for longer than one week. It can become addictive if taken for too long. Do not drink alcohol when taking this medicine. Return unused Codeine to the pharmacy for destruction.

### Tramadol (opioid-type pain relief – used *instead* of codeine in certain patients)

What is it for?	To help control <b>moderate</b> pain after surgery.
How do I take it?	Check the pharmacy label. Take this up to FOUR times daily (every 6 hours) if needed for pain not controlled by paracetamol, or if you are going to do something that brings on pain. This can be used alongside paracetamol.
Common side effects?	Constipation, Drowsiness/Dizziness, Feeling Sick, Confusion, Hallucinations, Dry Mouth.
Other information.	This is a short term medication and should usually not be taken for longer than one week. If taken for longer, the medication may need to be slowly reduced down rather than stopped abruptly. Do not drink alcohol when taking this medicine. Return unused Tramadol to the pharmacy for destruction.

### Morphine (stronger opioid pain relief)

What is it for?	To help control <b>severe</b> pain after surgery.
How do I take it?	If paracetamol and codeine (or paracetamol and tramadol) are not controlling the pain, morphine can also be taken carefully following the instructions on the pharmacy label on the bottle. Do not take higher doses or more doses than prescribed on the label. <b>*DO NOT TAKE MORPHINE WITHIN 2 HOURS OF CODEINE OR TRAMADOL*</b>
Common side effects?	Constipation, Drowsiness/Dizziness, Feeling Sick, Confusion, Itching, Dry Mouth.
Other information.	This is a short term medication and should usually not be taken for longer than one week. It can become addictive if taken for too long. Do not drink alcohol when taking this medicine. Return any unused Morphine to the pharmacy for destruction.

### Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs – NSAIDs - (e.g. Naproxen, Ibuprofen)

What is it for?	To help control pain by reducing inflammation.
How do I take it?	The dose will be individually tailored for you. Follow the pharmacy label. <b>Take with, or just after food.</b>
Common side effects?	Nausea, Rashes, Indigestion/Heartburn, Stomach Pain (may be due to bleeding or ulceration)
Other information.	Anti-inflammatories are not suitable for everyone. To minimise risk of side effects they should be used for a short duration where possible. Consult medical advice if you develop stomach pain, black stools or 'coffee ground' vomit.

## Laxatives

### Macrogols (Movicol)

What is it for?	Helps treat constipation through softening stools by drawing water into the bowel.
How do I take it?	Usually 1 sachet is mixed with water and taken up to TWICE daily. This medicine can take a few days to work, so can be taken to help prevent opioid-induced constipation, as well as to treat it.
Common side effects?	Diarrhoea
Other information.	<p>The dose may need altering up or down to maintain normal stool consistency. e.g. if diarrhoea occurs, stop, or reduce how many sachets are being taken.</p> <p>Keeping drinking fluids and moving about after surgery also helps prevent constipation.</p>

### Senna

What is it for?	Helps treat constipation by stimulating the bowel to contract
How do I take it?	1 to 2 tablets at night, when needed. Continue using Movicol when adding this in. This medication takes 8-12 hours to work.
Common side effects?	Diarrhoea, Stomach Cramping
Other information.	<p>The dose may need altering up or down to maintain normal stool consistency. e.g. if diarrhoea occurs, stop the tablets. This medication is for short term use.</p> <p>Keeping drinking fluids and moving after surgery also helps prevent constipation.</p>

## Other

### Acid-reducing drugs (e.g. omeprazole)

What is it for?	To reduce risk of stomach side-effects when taking anti-inflammatories
How do I take it?	Take ONE capsule each day
Common side effects?	Dizziness, Abdominal Pain, Constipation or Diarrhoea
Other information.	Unless this is a medication you usually take long term for other reasons, this can be stopped once you stop taking the anti-inflammatories.

## Discharge information

You will be discharged with a selection of the above medications appropriate to your individual needs. These medications are intended for short term use; however, if you need further supplies, please contact your GP.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Wrightington Pharmacy Department, telephone: **01257 25 6205** or Medicines Information at Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, telephone: **01942 82 2466**

**If you accidentally take more medication than is recommended, immediately seek medical advice. Contact your GP or NHS 111 for advice on what to do.**

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## Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

## Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager  
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
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## Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



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## How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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