

# Anticipatory Medicines (just in case medicines)



## What are anticipatory medicines (just in case medications)?

Anticipatory medicines (also known as just in case medicines) are a small supply of medicines for you to keep at home. They may be useful for treating symptoms related to your condition, that you might need in the future. This includes pain, anxiety or sickness.

Sometimes it's hard to get these medicines quickly, at night or a weekend. By giving them to you now, they are in your home if you need them.

Your medical professional may arrange a supply of these medicines for you. The medicines will come with paper forms, called medicine administration charts. The charts help your doctor or nurse give you medicines as needed. This is in addition to your usual medicine.

## Why you need anticipatory medicines (just in case medications)?

Anticipatory medicines are used if you can't swallow medicines in liquid or tablet form, for example, if you are drowsy or being sick and may include medication for:

- Pain
- Nausea and/or sickness
- Shortness of breath
- Secretions in the throat or chest that may cause noisy breathing
- Anxiety or restlessness

The medicines you are given are tailored to your needs and depend on your condition. Your doctor or nurse will explain this to you. You may not need all or any of the medications that are prescribed.

## How are these medicines given?

These medicines are usually given as injections just under the skin (the subcutaneous route). This is in case you can't take your usual medication by mouth. Anticipatory medicines (just in case medicines) can only be given by a trained healthcare professional. You cannot give yourself these medicines, nor can a friend or family member although in exceptional circumstances we may be able to train a family member.

You will be referred to the district nurses, who will give you a nursing folder. Keep your folder with the medication. It will include the medicine administration charts that the nurses will use to record what they have given. This is to make sure your treatment is effective and safe.

## Can I keep taking my other medication?

It can be helpful to see if any of your other medicines can be stopped without causing a problem, especially if you find it difficult to take things by mouth. It may be important to continue with some medicines taken by mouth, patch, or injection. Other medications may need to be adjusted. Your doctor or nurse will discuss this with you.

## How do I store these medicines?

As with any medicine follow these important safety steps:

- Store your medicine in the original boxes at room temperature, away from direct heat or light.
- Store your medicines in a safe, secure place. Make sure it is out of the sight and reach of children, vulnerable people, visitors and animals.
- Tell at least one close family member or friend where your medicines are stored. This helps to find them when needed.
- Do not share your medicines with anyone else. They are only prescribed for you.
- Take care of the paper forms that come with your medicines. Your nurse or doctor will need this information to give the medicines to you.

## What if I need more medicines?

Your district nurse will arrange to get a prescription from your doctor for more supplies. It is best to do this before supplies run out. If you notice supplies are running low, please let your nurse know.

The nurses can't collect medication from the community pharmacy. A friend or family member will need to be available to collect the medication or the community pharmacy may be able to deliver to you at home.

## What should I do with my medicine if it's no longer needed or out of date?

If medicines are no longer needed or are out of date, take them back to any community pharmacy or your GP surgery. It doesn't have to be the same community pharmacy that the medicines came from. Try and do this as soon as possible.

The nurses are unable to return medicine to for you. You can ask a friend or family member to do this on your behalf.

## Who can I speak to if I have more questions?

If you have any questions about your anticipatory medicines, please ask. You can talk to:

- Your GP
- Specialist palliative care nurse
- Your community nurse
- Your pharmacist
- Other health care professional



Please share this leaflet with your next of kin and carers so they can support you if anticipatory medication (just in case medication) are required.