

All About Strong Painkillers



An EasyRead Guide



There are lots of painkillers you can buy at the chemist or the supermarket.



They are usually good for pains like headaches or muscle ache.



But if you have really bad pain, you might need really strong painkillers.



You can only get these from your doctor.



There are different kinds of strong painkillers.

Codeine
Dihydrocodeine
Tramadol

These painkillers are strong.

Morphine
Diamorphine
Oxycodone
Fentanyl
Buprenorphine

These painkillers are very strong.



You can get them as tablets, liquids, suppositories, skin patches or injections.



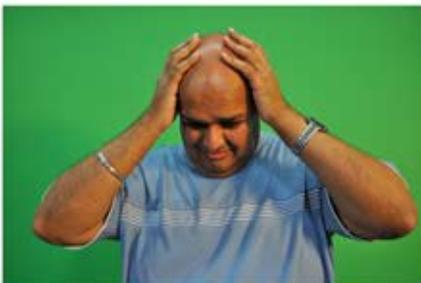
Strong painkillers work for most types of pain.



Your doctor will probably give you a low dose to start with.



If that doesn't get rid of the pain, they may give you a bigger dose.



Some people need more painkillers than others.

When you first start to take strong painkillers, or if you start to take a bigger dose, you might :



Feel sick.



Not be able to have a poo.



Feel sleepy.

These are called side effects. If you have any, tell your doctor. They should be able to give you something to help.

You might also :



Be confused



Feel restless or jumpy



Have bad dreams, or see things that aren't really there.

If you have any of these side effects, tell your doctor or nurse as soon as possible.



Some strong painkillers will start to work very quickly when you take them.



But they will stop working after a few hours. These are called **short acting painkillers**



Others might take a long time to start to work, but they last a long time. These are called **long acting painkillers**



Your doctor might give you both kinds



If you have pain most of the time, you will be given long acting painkillers to get rid of the pain



But sometimes the pain might get worse. This is called **breakthrough pain**.

It might be caused by something you do, or it might just happen.



Short acting painkillers will help to get rid of **breakthrough pain**.



Some everyday things can cause breakthrough pain, such as having a shower.

Try to take your short acting painkiller before you do these things



If your pain comes on for no reason, take a short acting painkiller as soon as you can.



You might also try resting.
Or using a hot-water bottle or an ice pack



You can take strong painkillers for a long time when prescribed by your doctor.



But don't stop taking them without talking to your doctor or nurse first.



Because if you stop taking them suddenly, you will feel more ill.



Your doctor can help you to slowly lower your dose without feeling ill.



If you drive a car,
talk to your doctor
about whether it is
safe for you to carry on.



You might find that
alcohol has more effect
than usual, but drinking
a small amount is usually ok
Ask your doctor or nurse.



If you plan to go to
another country, you
should get advice from
your doctor or nurse
about taking your
tablets with you.

Where to keep your painkillers



Keep your painkillers in the packing they came in.



Keep them in a dry place. The best place is a lockable cupboard. Keep them away from children.



If you have any medicine you don't need, take them back to the pharmacist. Don't throw them away.