

RUH

Patient information: Postnatal pain relief



This leaflet contains some useful information about the safest forms of pain relief that are available to you after the birth of your baby

Anti-inflammatories (e.g. Diclofenac, Ibuprofen)

- These are painkillers which, if taken regularly, are also very effective at helping to prevent pain. They are not, however, suitable for all patients so may not have been prescribed for you.
- Take as instructed on the container; usually regularly at first and then if you have been comfortable just take them when needed. Do not take more than instructed on the label.
- You should not take more than one anti-inflammatory medicine at any one time. Avoid aspirin while you are taking these. The exception to this is if you are taking low dose aspirin e.g. 75mg a day to thin your blood; you can continue with these. If you are in any doubt, check with your pharmacist.
- If you develop any side effects, in particular indigestion or wheezing or shortness of breath, stop taking the tablets and consult your GP.
- You can buy Ibuprofen from supermarkets or any pharmacy if required. If the pain persists longer than advised on discharge, you should consult your midwife or your GP.

Paracetamol

- This is a simple painkiller which, if taken regularly, is very effective at helping to prevent pain, particularly in combination with an anti-inflammatory painkiller which you may also have been prescribed.
 - It is advisable to take two 500mg tablets 4 times a day regularly at first. If you have been comfortable, you can just take them when needed (at least 4 hours apart, up to a maximum of 8 tablets in 24 hours).
 - You should not take any other medicines that contain Paracetamol, such as Co-codamol, Codydramol and some
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cold remedies at the same time. If you are in any doubt, check with your pharmacist.

- You can buy up to 32 paracetamol tablets from supermarkets or any pharmacy if you should require any more. However, if the pain persists longer than advised on discharge then you should consult your midwife or your GP.

Codeine or Dihydrocodeine

- These are strong painkillers, which may be taken if the simple painkillers that you are taking regularly are not quite strong enough or are not suitable for you.
- You should continue to take the simple painkillers (Paracetamol and/or anti-inflammatory) regularly as instructed and take Codeine or Dihydrocodeine for breakthrough pain when required.
- Usually one or two tablets can be taken when you need them at least 4 hours apart, up to a maximum of four times a day but check the box for your individual instructions.
- You should not take any other medicines containing Codeine or Dihydrocodeine or Tramadol whilst taking these. If in doubt, consult your pharmacist.
- Occasionally, side effects such as constipation or dizziness occur. Lactulose may be helpful to relieve constipation and may be bought from your pharmacy.

If the pain persists, you should consult your midwife or your GP.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

This service focuses on improving services for NHS patients. If you have questions, concerns, suggestions or compliments about any NHS service you receive then speak to a member of staff. If you feel that they cannot help you or you still have concerns, then contact:

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