

The following points are for you and those looking after you to remember:

- The alarm will sound and the pump will stop if the syringe is displaced or empty, the tubing is blocked or the battery has run down
- If the alarm sounds contact your district nurse or the 24 hour advice line at Dorothy House Hospice Care. You will be advised how to turn the pump off.

District Nurse contact:

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Dorothy House Hospice Advice Line (24 hours/day):
0345 0130 555

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG
01225 428331 www.ruh.nhs.uk

Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

Email ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656.

Going Home with a Syringe Driver

Patient information





What is a Syringe Driver?

A syringe driver is a portable battery-operated pump with a syringe containing medication to manage symptoms. It allows the medication to be delivered at a regular rate over 24 hours. The medication is delivered through thin tubing and a fine needle inserted just under the skin. This is called a 'subcutaneous infusion.'

The syringe driver is small enough to be carried in a pouch attached to a belt, a shoulder holster or large pocket.

Why do I need a syringe driver?

Some people find it difficult to swallow their medication in tablet or syrup form. Some people may feel sick or vomit frequently which means they can't keep their tablets in their stomach long enough for them to work. Some people's symptoms are difficult to control by tablets alone and a syringe driver may be used as well.

Instead of having repeated injections to receive medication the syringe driver can provide people with a simpler and more comfortable way to receive medication.

Once the correct dosage has been established, levels of medication in your blood will remain steady, maximising the benefit. It is portable and light and can be worn under clothing so you can remain independent.

How long will I need the syringe driver for?

You may only need to use a syringe driver for a few days or weeks. The nurse looking after you will give more detail about the amount of time you may need it for.

Who will look after the syringe driver?

The GP looking after you will prescribe the medications for your syringe driver.

The nurse looking after you will refill your syringe every day. If you are at home, a district nurse will come to your home to do this or this may be a registered nurse in a nursing home or community hospital. The nurse will:

- Check that your machine is working properly
- Check that the needle site is comfortable
- Check on your symptoms
- Replace the needle site when required

Please do

- Report any soreness, redness, irritation or swelling at the needle site to your nurse
- Contact the nurse if the needle accidentally comes out
- Contact your nurse or doctor if you have any concerns regarding your syringe driver or medication
- Keep all medication away from children
- Keep the syringe contents out of direct sunlight. They must also not become too warm. Please ask your nurse for advice on the best place to keep your driver.
- Take care when walking around with the syringe driver, use the holster provided or put the syringe driver in a pocket.
- Keep the syringe driver below the site of the needle
- **Do not get the syringe driver wet.** You can have a bath or a shower but try to keep the needle site dry and keep the machine out of the water by putting it on a stool by the bath or shower.