

How do I know that my syringe pump is working?

- The light above the 'ON/OFF' button flashes green every 30 seconds, and the display shows 'PUMP DELIVERING'. If it turns red or beeps, there's a problem - contact your nurse immediately. Beeping may also mean the syringe is empty.
- You may still need extra medicines while using the syringe pump. If you're at home and can swallow, you should have 'as needed' medicines for pain, sickness, or anxiety. If you've taken any in the past 24 hours, inform your District Nurse, Community Nurse, or GP. If you're in the In Patient Centre, tell a doctor or nurse.

Who will look after my syringe pump?

At home or in a care home, the Community District Nursing team visits daily to refill the syringe, check the needle, and ensure the medicines are working properly.

Community Nurse Contact: 0114 2266 578 (24/7)

In the hospice, nurses change the syringe daily and regularly check the pump, needle comfort, and medicine effectiveness.

Tell your nurse, GP, or hospice team if you notice:

- The colour of the medicines in the tubing or syringe has changed
- There is a cloudiness or sediment in the tubing or syringe
- The skin around the needle is red, swollen or painful
- The alarm on the pump sounds
- Any leakage of liquid/fluid at the injection site
- The needle comes out.

This leaflet is based on one produced by Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.



Syringe Pumps

Information for patients Palliative Care

Syringe Pump:



Weight: 230g, Size: 167 x 68 x 39 mm, Portable & battery operated

What is a syringe pump?

A syringe pump is a small, portable, battery-operated pump. It's fitted with a syringe which gives medicine through a small plastic cannula under the skin. This will run 24 hours a day, removing the need for repeated injections. It can be carried in a locked box and pouch attached to a belt or worn over the shoulder.

Why do I need one?

Sometimes it is easier for you to have some of your medicines this way. This may be because:

- You have been vomiting and find it difficult to keep your medicine down. Medicines to help reduce or stop the vomiting can be given in the syringe pump, along with medicines to help other symptoms such as pain. Once the vomiting has settled, you may be able to go back to having your medicines by mouth.
- There may be other unmanaged symptoms that can be improved by using a syringe driver to administer subcutaneous medication, if your current medicines aren't being effective.
- Syringe pumps can be a really effective way of getting on top of someone's pain quickly as the dosages in them can be changed every 24 hours. Once your pain is controlled you may be able to go back to medicines by mouth or a patch on the skin in some cases.
- You are unable to swallow medicines. Medicines to help your symptoms can be put into the syringe pump.

Living with your syringe pump

- Medicines in the syringe pump are absorbed over 24 hours to help control symptoms. Your GP, nurse, or ward team may adjust them. Do not tamper with the pump or syringe. If symptoms persist, contact your GP, District Nurse, St Luke's nurse, or ward team.
- You must keep the syringe pump and the needle site dry, especially when washing or bathing. If you drop the pump into water, contact your nurse, as you will need a new syringe pump to be sure that your medicines are being given correctly.
- The syringe in the pump should not be exposed to direct sunlight.
- The syringe pump should not be exposed to extremes of heat. Avoid placing the syringe pump next to a heat pad, electric blanket or hot water bottle.
- You can go out and about with the syringe pump as it can be carried in the pouch supplied. Please note: you should ask your doctor if your medicine in the syringe pump allows you to drive.
- If possible, eat and drink as normal. Always check with your doctor or pharmacist to see if your medication allows you to drink alcohol if you wish.