

Yarning about morphine



Morphine can be included as a part of a whole-of-life wellbeing approach for a seriously sick person.

It can help to make a person feel comfortable, safe, less worried and able to enjoy what matters most.

You are always in control of your health and wellbeing choices, including using morphine.



Let's share some yarns about **morphine**

Yarning about morphine is important for you, your family and your community.

Who can I yarn to about taking morphine?

Yarn with your care team about how morphine can help with pain and shortness of wind.

Talk about any worries or fears that you, your family or community may have about taking morphine.



“Morphine made me comfortable when I was very sick and gave me a chance to plant my feet on Country and connect again with community.”



Can morphine make it harder to yarn with others, pass on Cultural Knowledge and connect with ancestors and totems?

Morphine can cause sleepiness when first started. Safe doses can improve comfort and allow the person to enjoy Cultural ways of doing, knowing and being with family and community.

How can morphine help?

When a person is seriously sick, morphine can help with:

- pain especially when other pain medicines do not work and
- short wind to help make breathing feel easier.



Can morphine have side effects?

Morphine can cause a dry mouth, confusion, sleepiness, feeling sick and slowing down of the gut.

These side effects may be worse if the person has kidney trouble or uses alcohol.

Not every person gets side effects. Side effects can lessen as the body gets used to morphine.

Side effects can be managed with other medicines and doing things like drinking extra water, eating certain foods, or walking on Country.



Does morphine cause a person to get hooked?

Some people get hooked on morphine. But people who need morphine for serious sickness do not. Morphine helps keep these people comfortable, strong and connected to family and community.

Can a person drive or work with morphine?

It is best to discuss driving or working with the doctor or nurse. Morphine can make things seem difficult especially when it is used for the first time or changed. Morphine can cause sleepiness and slow reactions. Things can change as the body gets used to morphine.

Does morphine only come in tablets?

Morphine comes in tablets, liquid, and injection. Morphine can be given under the skin and via a pump.

Other strong medicines are used for pain and short wind. These can be given as patches, liquids, lozenges, nasal sprays or under the skin via a pump.



Why is a pump used?

Giving medicine via a pump can be safer when a person is very sick, sleepy, can't swallow or has a blocked gut.



Can morphine be shared?

No, morphine must not be shared. It is dangerous to swap or share pain medicines.

Are there different doses of morphine?

Yes, the correct dose of morphine can change with age, weight, frailty and during the stages of serious sickness. The care team can work with the person to find the right dose and whole of life approach.

Does morphine cause breathing to slow or stop?

Morphine can slow breathing but when given in the correct dose it will not stop breathing.

Does morphine or using the pump cause a person to pass away?

No, morphine in the pump helps with all of life wellbeing. It does not reduce the length of life because the person was already seriously sick.

The background of the entire page is a vibrant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art pattern. It features a dark blue base with intricate designs in orange, green, and white. These designs include stylized flowers, circular motifs resembling wheels or sunbursts, and various geometric patterns like dots and lines. The art is traditional in style, with bold outlines and a rich color palette.

More information

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL DOCTOR, NURSE OR ABORIGINAL HEALTH WORKER FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Name of service: _____

Telephone: _____

PallConsult thanks the members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community who have provided feedback during the development of this resource.

PallConsult has been funded to deliver the First Nations Palliative Care project under the First Nations Community Based Palliative Care investment package. PallConsult is a statewide service that provides education, resources, and 24/7 on-call support for the generalist health and aged care workforce.

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