The Macmillan Pharmacy Service aims to support and advance palliative care services, provided by community pharmacy and the wider multidisciplinary primary care team, in Greater Glasgow & Clyde. Our service objectives include:

> Provide information and tools to improve the quality, safety, prioritisation and cost-effectiveness of prescribing and dispensing in palliative care.

> Improve provision and co-ordination of palliative care services in the community through the development and delivery of palliative care training for community pharmacy and GP practice staff.

> Develop community pharmacy capacity to effectively, efficiently and safely support the needs of patients requiring palliative care.

Feedback: We are always looking to improve practice and are interested to know about improvements you would like to see. Please contact:

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Key prescribing points in palliative care

Get it right first time!

Macmillan Pharmacy Service

NHS

Greater Glasgow and Clyde

WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT
Morphine Sulfate M/R tablets 10 mg ‘CD’
Send <60> sixty tablet
Label ONE TO BE TAKEN TWICE A DAY
Modified release – long duration of action.
(Twelve hourly dosing interval.)

Prescribe as MST®

Morphine Sulfate Tablets 10 mg ‘CD’
Send <56> fifty six tablet
Label ONE TO BE TAKEN EVERY FOUR HOURS
Immediate release – short duration of action.
(Can be taken for breakthrough pain.)

Prescribe as Sevedol®

Morphine Sulfate Oral solution 10 mg/5 ml
Send <100> ml
Label 2.5ML TO BE TAKEN FOUR TIMES A DAY IF REQUIRED
Inappropriate selection at prescribing or dispensing stage have resulted in clinically significant adverse effects.
Careful with selection of strength: Oramorph® 10mg/5ml is commonly used in palliative care. Oramorph® concentrate solution 100mg/5ml (10 x potency) is seldom used.

Oxycodone Hydrochloride M/R tablets
10 mg ‘CD’
Send <56> fifty six tablet
Label ONE TO BE TAKEN TWICE A DAY
Modified release – long duration of action.
(Twelve hourly dosing interval.)

Prescribe as Longtec®

Oxycodone Hydrochloride Capsules
10 mg ‘CD’
Send <56> fifty six capsule
Label ONE CAPSULE EVERY FOUR HOURS
Immediate release – short duration of action.
(Can be taken for breakthrough pain.)

Prescribe as Shortec®

Oxycodone Hydrochloride Solution
Sugar Free 5 mg/5 ml ‘CD’
Send <100> one hundred ml
Label 5ML TO BE TAKEN EVERY FOUR TO SIX HOURS
Careful with selection: an Oxynorm® concentrated oral solution sugar free 10mg/ml is also available.

Oxynorm®

Oxycodone Hydrochloride Injection 10 mg/ml, 1 ml ampoule ‘CD’
Send <5> five ampoule
Label 10MG VIA SYRINGE PUMP OVER 24HRS
Careful with selection: additional sizes available which may be more appropriate if larger dose is required.
**Midazolam Injection** 10 mg/2 ml ampoule ‘CD’
Send <10> ten ampoule
Label 5MG OVER 24 HRS VIA SYRINGE PUMP

Midazolam injection 10mg/2ml ampoule allows suitable doses to be prescribed in the small volume required for:
- subcutaneous bolus doses,
- syringe pump infusions.

Only strength used in palliative care

Dexamethasone Solution for injection 3.3 mg/1 ml, 1 ml ampoule
Send <5> ampoule
Label 2MG VIA SUBCUTANEOUS BOLUS

NHS GG&G has switched to 3.3mg/ml injection as 4mg/1ml is now discontinued. Doses remain the same – only the volume of the injection administered will change:
- 2mg of 3.3mg/ml = 0.6ml
- 4mg of 3.3mg/ml = 1.2ml
- 8mg of 3.3mg = 2.4ml requires two injection sites as max volume of s/c bolus is 2ml

Give as bolus dose – not recommended for continuous subcutaneous infusion due to risk of insomnia and incompatibility with other drugs.

**Levomepromazine Tablets** 6 mg
Send <28> tablet
Label HALF A TABLET TO BE TAKEN TWICE A DAY

Levomepromazine 6mg tablets are unlicensed. It may take a pharmacy up to two days to obtain a supply but a palliative network pharmacy should have them in stock.

There is variation between brands regarding dispersion and scoring. Levinan® can be halved to obtain a 3mg dose, disperses well in water, can be used sublingually.

Remember to prescribe a diluent for syringe pumps!

**Lorazepam Tablets** 1 mg
Send <28> tablet
Label HALF A TABLET UNDER THE TONGUE 4-6 HOURLY AS REQUIRED (SCORED AND SUITABLE FOR SUBLINGUAL USE)

Lorazepam 1mg tablets need to be halved to provide a 500 microgram dose and should be taken sublingually to achieve a fast onset of action for palliative care patients.

Not all generic brands are scored or can be taken sublingually, but pharmacists will be aware of the correct generic brand to supply.
CD prescription requirements

Handwritten prescriptions are more likely to be incomplete, e.g. not having the patient's full given name, date of birth, directions or dose. Any clarification required out-of-hours can be a communication challenge.

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The dose must be on the prescription and must not be expressed as "to be taken, to be applied or to be injected as directed."

Diamorphine Hydrochloride Injection
10 mg/amp 'CD'
Send <5> five ampoule
Label 10MG VIA SYRINGE PUMP
OVER 24HRS

Pack size: 50's

The total quantity must be written in both words and figures.

Signature of Doctor

The address of the prescriber must be within the UK. The type of prescriber, e.g. doctor, pharmacist or nurse must be indicated and they must use the appropriate form.

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These key prescribing points are based on feedback from community pharmacies in the NHS GG&C area.

It is vital to get palliative and end-of-life prescribing right for people with cancer and other life limiting conditions, especially as they often need medicines urgently.

Inappropriate drug selection, prescription omissions and limited communication with pharmacies have led to unnecessary delays in medicine supply.

Please prescribe exactly from the NHS GG&C palliative care drugs list. For some medications or formulations used in palliative care, ampoule size and strength can be specific due to their volume, risk of precipitation and syringe pump compatibility.

Get it right first time and every time to deliver optimum management of patients without delay.

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The palliative care drugs list can be found in the Community Pharmacy Network leaflet. This resource can be downloaded (NHSGGC StaffNet only) from the professional portal at: www.palliativecareggc.org.uk.