

Appendix 2

A Quick Reference Guide: Prescribing a subcutaneous syringe pump (and subcutaneous PRN chart)

How to check syringe pump medicine compatibilities



Combining injectable medications in a syringe for delivery via a syringe pump creates a new unlicensed product. **Not all medications will be compatible with each other.** Prescribers must ensure that medications prescribed for delivery via a syringe pump are compatible.

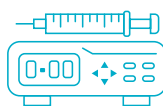
Free access medicines compatibility checker:
www.pallcare.info

If the required combination is not listed, please seek specialist advice. Options include splitting the medication between two syringe pumps or using alternative medications.

REMEMBER

- ✓ Maximum of 4 medications per syringe pump prescription.
- ✓ Prescribing typically compatible medications does not guarantee compatibility in every situation. All professionals should be able to undertake a simple syringe pump assessment.
- ✓ Seek specialist advice when needed (pharmacist or local Specialist Palliative Care Team).

How to choose a syringe pump diluent



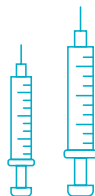
Sodium Chloride 0.9%

- Sodium chloride 0.9% is the diluent used routinely in Specialist Palliative Care practice in Northern Ireland. It is the preferred diluent to prevent inflammatory reactions at the skin infusion site.

REMEMBER

- ✓ Cyclizine is incompatible with sodium chloride 0.9%. If using cyclizine you must prescribe water for injection as the diluent or consider an alternative antiemetic.

Be aware of diluent volume



Prescribers **must not prescribe the size of the syringe used or the volume the medicines should be made up to.** For your information:

- If a 20ml syringe is being used, the maximum volume in the syringe is 18ml.
- If a 30ml syringe is being used, the maximum volume in the syringe is 23ml.
- If the medications prescribed do not fit a 30ml syringe, seek specialist advice (pharmacist or local Specialist Palliative Care Team). Options include splitting the medications between two syringe pumps or using alternative medications.

How to assess a syringe pump is functioning correctly

- All prescribers should be able to monitor the patient for syringe pump delivery, site absorption and medication compatibility issues.
- Prescribing typically compatible medications does not guarantee medication compatibility in every situation.

Assess infusion site

Examine for pain, swelling, redness, infection, bruising or oedema.

Assess infusion line

Examine the line for blood, check the line is not leaking or disconnected.

Assess medication in the syringe and line tubing

Examine for discolouration/cloudiness, crystallisation, small precipitates or anything other than clear and colourless.

Assess syringe pump

Check pump is delivering and the infusion is running to time (amount delivered in mls should be in line with length of time the infusion has been running).

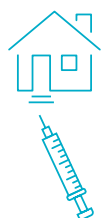
- If you find any problems, speak to the nursing team managing the syringe pump to try to resolve the issue and decide if you need further specialist advice.
- Please report incidents through local reporting systems.

How to prescribe syringe pumps at home or when a patient is being discharged home

WHEN A PATIENT IS AT HOME OR IS BEING DISCHARGED TO HOME FROM AN INPATIENT SETTING, YOU MUST PRESCRIBE ON PAPER CHARTS.



- Use the paper chart '**HSC Prescription and Administration of Medicine via Subcutaneous Syringe Pump**'.
- Print the medicine name in BLOCK capitals and write doses for all medicines in words and figures to ensure the intended dose is clear and unambiguous.
- When prescribing the supply of syringe pump medications **remember to order diluent** e.g. sodium chloride 0.9% in 10 ampoules.



- Use the paper chart '**HSC Prescription and Administration Record of Subcutaneous Medicine for Symptom Management in Primary Care**'.
- Print the medicine name in BLOCK capitals and write doses for all medicines in words and figures to ensure the intended dose is clear and unambiguous.

