## **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.

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#### **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

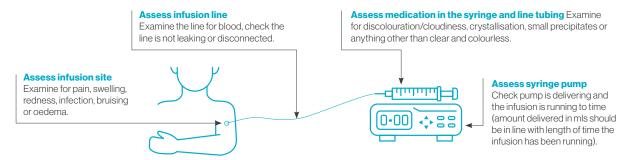


Prescribers <u>must not prescribe the size of the syringe used or the volume the medicines</u> <u>should be made up to</u>. For your information:

- 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.



- 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.

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- 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.

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

### **EXAMPLES**

Completed Syringe Pump Chart

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