

-The pump is accidentally dropped and may be damaged.

-The colour of the medicines in the syringe or tubing changes.

-The skin around the needle is red, swollen or sore, or the needle falls out.

If you need any extra medicine for pain or other symptoms while you wait for your nurse to arrive to check your syringe pump, you can take the 'as needed' medicines your doctor has prescribed.

### **How do I carry my syringe pump?**

Your syringe pump is small enough to be put into a small bag or a pouch. This can be attached to your belt or worn as a shoulder bag. Please ask your nurse for an appropriate bag to carry your pump.

You should not expose your syringe pump to direct sunlight, or direct heat such as hot water bottles or heaters, as this can affect the medicines in it.

### **Can I go on holiday with my syringe pump?**

If you are aiming to go on holiday, please speak with your nurse or doctor as some planning for your syringe pump will be required.

### **Can I take a bath or shower with my syringe pump?**

If you get your syringe pump wet it will no longer work. If you wish to bath or shower please discuss this with your nurse. You should not swim with your syringe pump.

If you have any other questions please talk to your doctor or nurse

### **Useful Contact Details in Community**

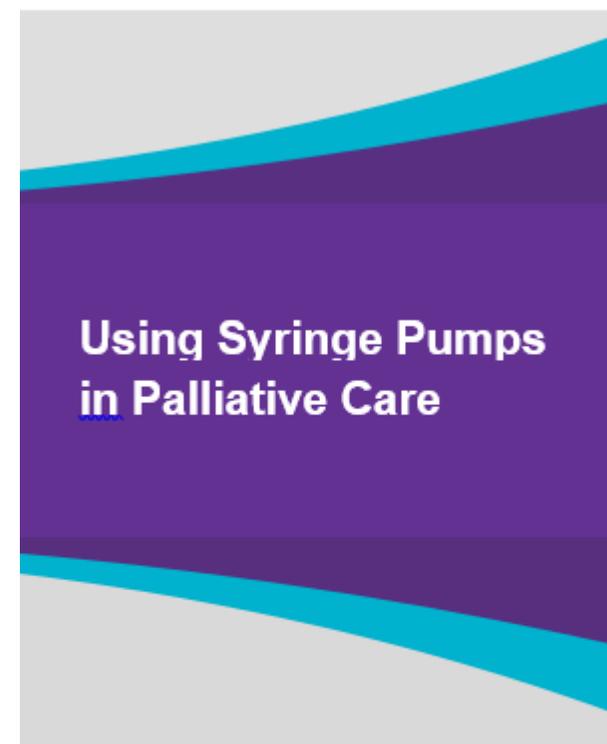
District Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_

Out of hours District Nurse:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other useful contacts:  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you no longer need your syringe pump, it is important to please return it to:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Developed by the NI Macmillan Palliative Care Pharmacy Service Improvement Team in conjunction with the Regional Palliative Medicine Group (RPMG) January 2019. For review January 2022



### **Palliative Care Patient Information Leaflet**

## What is a syringe pump?

A syringe pump, also known as a syringe driver is a small, battery powered pump which holds a syringe with your medicines in it. It is small enough to be carried around in a coat pocket or small bag. It is designed to give your medicines to you continuously usually over a 24 hour period. Not all medicines can go in a syringe pump. You may still need to take other medicines by mouth. The syringe pump used in Northern Ireland is the T34 pump seen below.



## Why do I need a syringe pump?

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. Medicines to help with other symptoms like pain can also go into the syringe pump. Once the

vomiting has settled you may be able to go back to having your medicines by mouth.

- You have so many medicines to take that you are finding it difficult to swallow them all. Putting some of the medicines in the syringe pump can reduce the number of medicines you need to take by mouth.
- You are unable to swallow medicines. Starting a syringe pump is another way of giving the medicines you need. It does not mean that your medicines have stopped working or are not strong enough.

## How long will I have my syringe pump for?

Some syringe pumps will be used for a short time to control your symptoms, while others may be used for longer periods. You can discuss this with your nurse or doctor.

## How does my syringe pump work?

Your syringe pump is attached to a syringe containing your medicines. This is connected to a thin plastic tube which has a small needle. The needle is placed just under your skin at the top of your arm, chest, leg, or abdomen. The site will normally be changed by your nurse every few days. The needle is held in place by a

clear plaster that helps to keep it clean and dry.

The medicines from your syringe pump will be absorbed into your body throughout the whole day.

## Who looks after my syringe pump?

In hospital, your nurses will check your syringe pump every four hours to ensure it is working.

If you are at home with a syringe pump your district nurse will call with you every day. The syringe pump will be refilled around the same time each day. Your nurse will check that the pump is working and check your skin around the area of the needle.

## What happens if something goes wrong with my syringe pump?

The light above the 'ON/OFF' button will flash green every 60 seconds when your pump is working correctly.

Contact your Nurse or Out of Hours Service (see useful contact details below) as soon as possible if:

- The light turns red or the alarm sounds.
- The pump gets wet or there is a leak of fluid around the needle.