

Supplementary medicines information for palliative care patients

All medicines are supplied with a manufacturer's 'Patient Information Leaflet'. This can provide a great deal of information about the medicine, its normal uses and side effects. However, most medicines have more than one effect on the body and for many years, palliative care (hospice) doctors have found that certain medicines are safe and effective for the treatment of symptoms **other** than those specified by the medicine's manufacturer and there is now plenty of experience to confirm such use.

We are providing you with this extra information to inform you of the reason(s) why you are taking this medicine and to highlight any other information. This should be read in conjunction with the **attached** manufacturer's patient information leaflet.

Haloperidol

In palliative care, haloperidol is sometimes prescribed to treat sickness and/or vomiting, agitation or nightmares.

Frequently asked questions

Q. What form(s) of this medicine are there and how is it usually taken?

- Haloperidol is available as a tablet, liquid and injection.
- The total daily dose for the symptoms listed above ranges from 0.5mg to 5mg (sometimes the dose may need to be higher), usually prescribed as a single dose at bed time or occasionally divided into two doses a day.
- The total daily dose may also be given as an infusion under the skin over 24 hours via a syringe driver (sub-cutaneous pump).

NB Always follow the dose indicated on the label or advised by a healthcare professional.

Q. What are the most common side effects?

When taking haloperidol in the low doses prescribed for preventing sickness it is rare for side effects to occur. However, the most likely side effects you may suffer when it is used for sickness are:

- Sleepiness which can be minimised if you take the dose at bed time.
- Abnormal muscle movements or restlessness, which is unlikely with doses below 5mg.

However if

they occur, do let your doctor or nurse know as soon as possible.

- Haloperidol can make conditions like Parkinson's disease worse. If you have Parkinson's disease, make sure your doctor is aware of this.

Further information

If you have any questions about any of the medicines you have been prescribed or have any problems with side effects, please speak to one of the following:

St Catherine's Hospice

Telephone: 01293 447333

St Catherine's Hospice Pharmacist

Telephone: 01293 535000