

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.

Nabilone

Nabilone is a medicine normally used to treat sickness caused by cancer treatments which does not respond to conventional anti-sickness medicines. In palliative care, low dose nabilone is sometimes used to treat breathlessness.

Frequently asked questions

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

- Low dose nabilone for breathlessness usually comes as a capsule containing 250mcg nabilone.
- The dose for breathlessness is usually from 250mcg to 1000mcg per day.
- The doctors at St Catherine's Hospice usually recommend starting with a dose of 250mcg once daily.
- Depending on how you respond to the medicine, the dose may then be increased. Your doctor or nurse specialist will advise you about this.

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

Q. What are the most common side effects?

Side effects from low dose nabilone treatment are uncommon. However, you may rarely experience some of the following:

- Drowsiness, dizziness, feeling of unease, some loss of movement co-ordination, dry mouth, low blood pressure, difficulties with concentration and sleep and nausea.
- Drowsiness is more likely to occur if you are taking other medicines which cause sleepiness. Please inform your doctor or specialist nurse of any other medicines you are taking.
- You should not drive immediately after taking low dose nabilone if it makes you sleepy.

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