

M O R P H I N E

Information That Patients Need to Know About Their Medication

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What is morphine immediate release?

Morphine is an analgesic medication that has been prescribed by your doctor to relieve or prevent your pain. Oral morphine is available as a long-acting tablet or capsule, or a short-acting, or immediate release (IR) tablet, oral solution, or rectal suppository (see table below). This monograph is about short-acting, or IR, morphine. Other names you may see on the medication label are morphine, morphine sulfate, or Roxanol.

Formulation	Strength(s)
Tablet	15, 30 mg
Oral solution	10 mg/5 mL, 20 mg/5 mL, 20 mg/mL, 100 mg/5 mL
Rectal suppository	5, 10, 20, and 30 mg

What is it used for?

Morphine is used to treat moderate-to-severe pain (such as that due to broken bones, surgery, or cancer) that does not respond to other analgesic medications, including acetaminophen or an anti-inflammatory drugs (eg, ibuprofen, naproxen).

How do I take this medication?

Ask your pharmacist and follow the instructions on the product packaging or prescription bottle. Your doctor may schedule your morphine to be taken every 4 or 6 hours, or may direct you to take it more frequently as needed.

Do not take more than the recommended dose or extra doses, and do not take the medication longer than recommended. Morphine can be taken with food or on an empty stomach (but always with a full glass of water). Sometimes taking it with food can lessen stomach upset that may occur. It can be taken with most other medications, foods, and drinks—but not alcohol.

If you are taking the oral solution, or giving a dose to a

child, use a calibrated measuring syringe or spoon instead of a household teaspoon to measure the dose. The oral solution can taste bitter, so you can mix it with a small amount of applesauce or juice to mask the taste. The amount of applesauce or juice should be small enough so the entire dose can be taken in one mouthful.

Is this drug safe?

If taken under a doctor's supervision, morphine is considered safe. It is very important that you take this medication exactly as prescribed. It also is very important that you pay attention to any adverse effects the medication causes and contact your prescriber about them. Morphine can interact with other medications, including alcohol, making it riskier, so make sure your pharmacist and doctor have an accurate list of all medications you take, including supplements, herbs, and over-the-counter medications.

Common side effects of morphine include drowsiness, dizziness, nausea, and vomiting. These side effects should lessen as you continue taking the medication. Constipation also is a common side effect that is likely to occur within a day or two of you starting to take morphine. Your doctor will prescribe medication to prevent this side effect; it is important you take the laxative your doctor recommends to prevent constipation.

Less common side effects include changes in vision, hallucinations, fainting, urine retention, confusion, and shallow breathing (respiratory depression). Contact your doctor right away if you experience any of these side effects. Seek immediate medical attention if you experience the following signs of an allergic reaction: rash, itchiness, swelling, or trouble breathing.

Do not take morphine if you have a history of alcohol abuse. You also should avoid morphine if you have a history of liver disease (including hepatitis), severe kidney disease, seizure disorder, severe constipation, or breathing problems.

How do I know if it is working?

Since you are taking this medication for pain, you'll know it's working when you start to feel better! It usually takes about 45 minutes for a short-acting tablet, oral solution, or rectal morphine suppository to start working. Morphine usually provides pain relief for about 4 hours, so you shouldn't take it more often unless directed to do so by your doctor. If your pain does not get better, you may want to call your pharmacist or prescriber to see if you need a larger dose or if a different medication.

How do I know if something is wrong?

You should discontinue morphine and seek immediate medical attention if you experience fainting, chest pain, trouble breathing, swelling, throat tightness, seizures, or abdominal soreness or tenderness. If you experience a rash, itching, vomiting, or mild constipation, call your pharmacist or doctor for further advice. Nausea is common and can be helped by taking morphine with food. If food does not help the nausea, call your pharmacist or doctor.

How do I store my medication?

Store your morphine prescription in a cool, dry, safe place, such as a nightstand or a locked cabinet or box. It should be stored

in a container with a child-proof lid. Don't store morphine or any medications in a humid place, such as the kitchen or bathroom. All medications should be stored in a location in your house that is out of reach of pets, children, or adults who could take or misuse this medication on purpose or by accident. Ask your pharmacist how to dispose of your morphine prescription if you no longer need to take it, or if it's expired.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

If you are taking morphine on a regular schedule and you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. Importantly, you should never take double the recommended dose or take doses closer than 3 hours apart. Do not take more than your doctor recommends. If you are taking morphine occasionally for pain, then you can just take the medication when you need it, but no sooner than directed on the prescription bottle. If you are unsure what to do, contact your pharmacist.

References

1. Morphine sulfate tablet [package insert]. Columbus, OH: Roxane Laboratories, Inc.; 2014.
2. Morphine sulfate solution [package insert]. Columbus, OH: Roxane Laboratories, Inc.; 2014.
3. Morphine sulfate suppository [package insert]. Minneapolis, MN: Paddock Laboratories, LLC.; 2012.



Prescriber Quick Fact Card

Name:

Morphine sulfate (short acting, or immediate-release [IR])

Class:

Opioid, analgesic

Dosage Forms:

- Tablet (15, 30 mg)
- Oral Solution (10 mg/5 mL, 20 mg/5 mL, 20 mg/mL, 100 mg/5 mL)
- Rectal Suppository (5, 10, 20, 30 mg)

Indications:

Moderate-to-severe pain

Directions for Use:

Every 2-4 hours either scheduled or as needed, per prescriber instructions

Cautions:

- Do not use with alcohol or other sedatives (such as benzodiazepines or sedative-hypnotics) without discussing this with your doctor.
- Keep all morphine out of reach of children, pets, or others who may take it accidentally or on purpose. If this drug

is taken by someone for whom it was not prescribed, seek medical attention right away.

- Morphine may lead to overdose and death.
- Your body may become used to taking morphine, so you should not stop taking this medication abruptly. Talk to your doctor if you feel that the dose of morphine should be reduced or stopped.
- Morphine may not be used without supervision from a physician during pregnancy. Long-term use during pregnancy may cause withdrawal in the newborn child, which can be fatal.

Side Effects:

- **Common:** Sedation, constipation, itching, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, headache, urinary retention
- **Serious:** Cardiac arrest, orthostatic hypotension, shock, syncope, myoclonus, coma, seizure, dyspnea, respiratory depression, drug dependence resulting in withdrawal

Monitoring:

- Analgesic effect, bowel movement quality and frequency, abuse or misuse behaviors, respiratory rate, level of sedation, and blood pressure.