

Medication Information Sheet



Morphine brands: Avinza[®], Kadian[®], MSContin[®], Oramorph SR[®], MSIR[®], Embeda[®], others

Medications are only ONE part of a successful treatment plan. They are appropriate when they provide benefit, improve function and have either no or mild, manageable side effects. Importantly, medications (even if natural) are chemical substances not expected in the body, and as such have side effects. Some of the side effects might be unknown. The use of medications/drugs for any purpose requires patient consent. This practice does NOT require a patient to use any medication.

Information & potential benefits

Schedule II opioids are pain relievers that work on specific opioid pain receptors in the body. Opioids are believed to be the most effective pain killing medications. Alternatives include non-medication modalities, pain interventions and non-opioid medications. Schedule II opioids have the highest risk of abuse and addiction and the highest risk of fatal overdose. They cannot be refilled and cannot be called into a pharmacy.

Potential risks and side effects

Common and basic side effects include nausea, dizziness, lightheadedness, fatigue, sweating, mental clouding, constipation, itching, and sexual problems. You should let your practitioner know if you experience any of these. Constipation may need continued attention. Diet is important: eating fruits and vegetables & drinking plenty of fluids also can help. In many cases a laxative regimen is required. There is a risk of addiction with the use of controlled substances. The risk appears low unless there is a family or personal history of addiction to drugs or alcohol. However, there is no guarantee that you will not become addicted. Opioid pain medications increase the risk of asthma attacks or other lung problems in patients with lung disease such as asthma. This potentially fatal effect can occur even in very low doses. All opioids are dangerous in persons with prostate problems, low blood pressure, head injury or increased intracranial pressure. Rare but serious side effects of opioid products include seizures, constipation requiring surgery, heart failure, and death. In the process of removing morphine from your body, the liver turns the morphine into other chemical compounds. Those other compounds are slowly removed from the body by the kidneys. In cases of kidney failure, the compounds are not removed from the body. Those morphine waste products can cause twitching, muscle jerks, swelling/edema, and/or confusion and such side effects can occur even in cases of normal kidney function.

Dosing information

Morphine for chronic pain comes as injections, liquid, regular tablets and long-acting tablets.

The long acting morphine products (such as Avinza, Kadian, MSContin, OramorphSR and Embeda) are used for chronic pain and should be taken consistently. Extra doses are never used for extra pain as these medications work slowly and work properly by keeping a stable level of morphine in the body.

The liquid and regular tablets are used for both the extra pain that can occur occasionally in chronic pain and in the acute pain of surgery or injury. The liquid form is called Roxanol[®] and the tablets are called MSIR[®]. These are very potent medications that should be used only as directed.

Important information

Disclaimer: This is for informational purposes only. This does not replace the instructions you received from your provider, does not constitute initiation of medical treatment or establishment of a patient-physician relationship, does not constitute any form of recommendation, prescription or medical advice, and does not imply that the medication is appropriate or FDA approved for any condition. This information is not a complete listing of instructions, doses, uses or side effects. If this was prescribed to you, you must review this information with your pharmacist and prescriber before starting the medication. Any medication may interfere with the ability to drive, concentrate or operate machinery; patients must be responsible for their own behavior and should not engage in any dangerous activity if there is any question of impairment. All medications have side effects and drug interactions, some serious, some fatal. Let all of your practitioners and pharmacists know about every substance used. Alcohol, herbals or illegal drugs are not considered safe with these medications. Assume no medication is safe during pregnancy or while breast feeding. The medication may interfere with birth control. Almost any medication can cause sleepiness, insomnia, dizziness, confusion, hallucinations, anxiety, panic, constipation or diarrhea, headache, chest pain and nausea or vomiting, among others. Most medications should NOT be stopped suddenly because of the risk of withdrawal.