



West Hertfordshire
Hospitals
NHS Trust



A guide to...

T 34 Syringe Pump

Patient Information
for patients, families and carers

How to contact us

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If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net



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The T34 Syringe pump is a small portable machine which runs from a battery. The pump gives a continuous subcutaneous infusion of medications when swallowing medications may be difficult.

For many patients the use of a syringe pump is short term while symptoms settle.



Why do I need my medication in a syringe pump?

There may be a number of reasons why you have a syringe pump prescribed:

- You may have problems with nausea and vomiting which make swallowing and absorption of medications difficult for you.
- You may have a sore mouth or throat which makes swallowing medications difficult.
- Your symptoms may be difficult to manage initially; having a syringe pump running can help to gain quicker symptom control before going back to oral medications.
- You may be sleepy, tired or recovering from treatment such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy and finding medications difficult to manage.
- Not all medications can be given by a syringe pump, the main reasons for having a syringe pump is for giving pain killers and anti-sickness medications, there are a few other medications which can be given by this route but this will be discussed with you or your family/carers.

How will my medications be administered?

- The syringe pump is connected to a thin plastic tube which runs from the pump to a small cannula which is inserted just under your skin in the subcutaneous layer.

- The cannula is very easy to insert and should not cause you any pain or discomfort, it is easily removed by a small pull and should not cause any discomfort. The cannula can stay in place for a few days before it needs to be changed. If you experience any soreness or inflammation at the cannula site inform your nursing team.
- The pump delivers small amounts of drugs continuously under the skin over a 24 hour period.
- The medications used are drawn up in a 20 ml syringe by the nurses. The syringe is secured on top of the pump. The syringe pump is locked by the nurse and placed in a clear plastic clear box.
- The pump runs on a 9v battery which will need changing about every three days. The nurses caring for you will change the battery.
- The cannula is secured by a clear plastic dressing applied on to your skin.
- A registered nurse will change the medications every 24 hours.
- In the hospital the syringe pump and the cannula site will be checked every 4 hours.
- Having a syringe pump in place does not prevent you going home, the community nursing teams are asked to continue with the administration.
- It is usually easier to have the syringe pump placed in a handbag or fabric bag over your shoulder to carry around.
- If the syringe pump is dropped or damaged please inform your nursing team.
- The syringe pump is not water proof so you must keep it secure and away from water when washing or bathing.
- If you hear a dull alarm ringing from the pump, let the nursing team caring for you know. This usually indicates the battery is running low or the cannula may need changing.

If you have any other questions, please speak to the healthcare team caring for you.

Palliative Care Team

Monday to Friday – 9 am – 5 pm

Saturday and Sunday 10 am - 4 pm

Tel: **01923 217930**

24-hour specialist palliative care advice line: **01923 335 356**