

# McKinley T34 syringe pump

A patient's guide

### **What is a syringe pump?**

A syringe pump is a small, portable, battery-operated pump. It enables medicines to be given under the skin continuously.

### **Why do I need one?**

It may be that you are having trouble swallowing medicines or that you have been vomiting and finding it hard to keep medicines down.

Giving medicines under the skin means that they are absorbed into your system and are able to work to help relieve your symptoms. It avoids the need for frequent injections.

### **How does it work?**

The nurse will insert a small needle or plastic tube under your skin. This will be connected by a thin tube to a syringe containing your medicine. The syringe is inserted into the syringe pump.

The syringe pump gradually pushes the syringe plunger to deliver the medicines over 24 hours. A nurse will change the syringe every 24 hours.

The needle/plastic tube will be taped in place and usually only needs changing every few days.

### **How do I know if the syringe pump is working properly?**

The nurse or doctor providing your syringe pump will have checked that it is working before setting it up.

A small green light will flash every 30 seconds or so to show the pump is working.

### **Will there be any side effects?**

Your medicines have been selected to treat the symptoms you have. Often the medicines are an 'injection' preparation of medicines you previously had as tablets. The dose of your medicine will be adjusted to minimise the side effects.

### **Will it make me sleepy?**

Drowsiness can be a side effect of some pain relieving medicines and some anti-sickness medicines. Being unwell often makes people more sleepy than usual. If you have concerns about feeling sleepy please discuss them with medical and nursing staff.

### **Who will look after it?**

Your nurse will check regularly that the syringe pump is working correctly, that you are receiving the prescribed medicines and that the needle/tube is comfortable.

### **What do I do if the pump beeps or an alarm sounds?**

If the syringe pump beeps or an alarm sounds the most important thing is not to worry. You do not need to do anything apart from informing your nurse straight away.

### **Some dos**

- If you are walking around, ask the nursing staff for a small bag/pouch to carry the syringe pump in.
- When you are in bed or resting in a chair, the syringe pump can be put on a flat surface next to you, but do not place the syringe pump at a higher level than the needle/tube site.

### **Some don'ts**

- Do not interfere with the line or pump.
- Do not press the buttons on the pump control panel.
- Do not get the syringe pump or needle/tube site wet.
- Do not drop the syringe pump.
- Do not expose the syringe pump to heat or bright sunlight.

### **Contact your nurse if:**

- You are worried that your syringe pump is not working properly or has been damaged.
- The colour of the medicines has changed or become cloudy.
- The skin around the needle/tube is red, swollen or painful.
- The alarm sounds.
- You have any other concerns.

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