

You (or your loved one) are taking a medication called morphine (brand name MS Contin®). Morphine is an opioid pain medicine. It may also be used for shortness of breath.

Morphine comes in many forms. This form is an extended-release tablet that is specially designed to provide pain medicine for several hours. It is important that you **DO NOT CRUSH** this tablet. As with all medications, be sure to follow the hospice team's instructions carefully when using morphine and do not take any extra or take more often than prescribed unless you check with the hospice team first.

## Possible side effects of morphine:

Seek emergency medical help if you (or your loved one) have any of the following signs of a severe allergic reaction:

- Swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat
- Hives (red, raised, itchy skin)
- Difficulty breathing

Contact the hospice team if you (or your loved one) are experiencing one or more of these serious side effects:

- Sleep apnea (breathing stops for long periods of time when sleeping)
- Severe fatigue, severe dizziness, fainting
- Chest pain, fast heartbeat
- Confusion, seizures
- Severe abdominal pain, severe constipation
- Swelling of arms/legs, chills, sore throat
- Painful or trouble with urination
- Depression, mood changes
- Burning/numbness feeling
- Not able to move, trouble controlling body movements, muscle spasm

Potential less serious side effects of morphine may include:

- Loss of strength and energy
- Dry mouth
- Nausea/vomiting
- Constipation
- Headache, anxiety
- Sweating more than usual
- Diarrhea
- Lack of appetite

## Other things to be aware of when using morphine:

- Constipation is a common side effect of morphine. The hospice team may prescribe you (or your loved one) a laxative to help with this.
- Morphine may cause drowsiness, which may impair physical or mental abilities. You (or your loved one) should use caution when performing activities that require being alert (for example: driving or operating equipment).
- Avoid drinking alcohol with morphine as it can increase the risk of side effects.
- Contact the hospice team if your (or your loved one's) symptoms do not improve or get worse.

Reference: *Clinical Pharmacology* last accessed 1.26.24