

## What alarms & alerts may I see or hear?

- Low/End Battery** Battery needs changing.
- Occlusion** Line is kinked or blocked.
- Pump paused too long** Pump has been stopped for more than 2 minutes.
- End program** The infusion is complete.
- Syringe displaced** The syringe has become detached from the driver mechanism.
- Syringe nearly empty** This alert will sound towards the end of the infusion (2 beeps every 2 minutes); the District/Community Nursing team should be on their way to change the infusion.

**For all these alarms please call the District/Community Nursing team.**

### Emergency contact details:

District/Community Nurse:	Specialist Palliative Care Nurse:
.....	.....
GP:	Out of hours contact:
.....	.....

North London Hospice  
47 Woodside Avenue,  
London N12 8TT  
(for Sat Nav, use N12 8TF)

Tel 020 8343 8841  
Fax 020 8343 7672

Email: [nlh@northlondonhospice.co.uk](mailto:nlh@northlondonhospice.co.uk)  
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Serving the Boroughs of Barnet, Enfield & Haringey

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## T34 Syringe Pump

Information for patients and carers with a syringe driver at home

# What is a syringe pump?

The syringe pump is a small portable battery operated pump that pushes a syringe to give your medication slowly over a set period of 24 hours.

The syringe that is connected to the pump is filled with medicine that has been prescribed by your doctor to help your symptoms. Your medicine will be reviewed on a regular basis and may be changed if necessary.

You do not need to do anything to the syringe pump. The medicine will continue to be absorbed over 24 hours, continuously helping your symptoms.

## How will the syringe pump be connected to me?

A long thin tube is connected to the syringe, with a tiny needle at the other end. Your nurse will insert the needle subcutaneously, just under the skin, usually in your upper chest area or upper arm. They will put a clear dressing over the needle to keep it clean, dry and in place. Once the needle is in place you should not feel it and it can stay there for several days.

## Why do I need a syringe pump?

Syringe pumps are used for several reasons. It is a simpler and more comfortable way to receive medication for people who would otherwise need repeated injections.

Not all of these reasons will apply to you:

- Some people find it difficult to swallow their medicine in tablet or syrup form.
- Others may feel sick or vomit frequently so cannot keep their tablets in their stomachs long enough for them to work.
- When symptoms are difficult to control by tablets alone, a syringe pump may be used until it is possible to re-start tablets.

## Who will look after my syringe pump?

Your nurses at home or the care home will check your syringe pump regularly to make sure that it is working well, the needle is comfortable and there are no problems with the medicines. They will change the syringe each day.

## What do I need to look out for?

Your symptoms: Tell your nurse or doctor if your symptoms persist or change in any way once the syringe pump is set up.

Your skin: Sometimes the medicine in the syringe can cause a skin reaction. Your nurse will check the needle site regularly. If the area becomes sore, the needle will be moved to another part of your body.

## How will I know the syringe pump is working?

If the syringe pump is working normally a green light will flash twice a minute next to the on/off button. If the pump has stopped for any reason this light will turn red.

## Contact your nurse if you notice any of the following:

- The colour of the medicines in the tubing or syringe has changed
- There is a cloudiness or sediment in the tubing or syringe
- The skin around the needle is red, swollen or painful
- The alarm on the pump sounds.

Please do not attempt to remove the syringe or press any of the buttons on the pump unless your nurse tells you to.

## What else do I need to look out for?

Syringe pumps are quite strong but can be damaged by being dropped or crushed. A syringe pump must not get wet. Ask your nurse for advice about washing or showering.

Keep the syringe contents out of direct sunlight, and do not allow them to become too hot. Avoid placing the pump next to a heat pad, hot water bottle or electric blanket. Ask your nurse for advice on the best place to keep your syringe pump. You can get a fabric holder if you want to be mobile.

A syringe pump must not get wet. Ask your nurse for advice about washing or showering.