

Strong opioids

1 Morphine is the strong opioid of choice for oral use

Several preparations are available including:

Immediate release oral morphine

- Oramorph liquid 10mg/5ml, 100mg/5ml (4 hourly)
- Oramorph unit dose vials 10mg/5ml, 30mg/5ml, 100mg/5ml (4 hourly)
- Sevredol tablet 10mg, 20mg, 50mg (4 hourly)

Sustained release oral morphine tablets and capsules

- MST Continus 5mg, 10mg, 15mg, 30mg, 60mg, 100mg, 200mg (12 hourly)
- Oramorph SR 10mg, 30mg, 60mg, 100mg (12 hourly)
- MXL 30mg, 60mg, 90mg, 120mg, 150mg, 200mg (24 hourly)
- Morcap SR 20mg, 50mg, 100mg (12 or 24 hourly)

Sustained release oral suspensions

- MST Continus 20mg, 30mg, 60mg, 100mg, 200mg (12 hourly)

Morphine suppositories are available if the rectal route is preferred - consult local pharmacy for availability

2 Diamorphine is the strong opioid of choice for parenteral use because of its greater solubility - maximum recommended concentration 250mg/ml

3 Phenazocine* is useful if there is genuine morphine intolerance. One 5mg tablet is equipotent with 25mg morphine but has a longer duration of action

- Narphen 5mg (6 - 8 hourly)

4 Fentanyl TTS patch. Useful especially when there is difficulty swallowing, vomiting or intractable constipation; dose titration is more difficult and expensive. Possibility of withdrawal symptoms when converting from morphine - responds to small doses of immediate release oral morphine

- Durogesic 25mcg/hr, 50mcg/hr, 75mcg/hr, 100mcg/hr (72 hourly)

Conversion from oral morphine to transdermal fentanyl

Morphine (mg/day)	<135	135	225	315	405	495	585	675	765
		-224	-314	-404	-494	-584	-674	-764	-854
Fentanyl (mcg/hour)	25	50	75	100	125	150	175	200	225

5 Hydromorphone* has recently become available in this country; it may be useful if there is genuine morphine intolerance

- Palladone capsules 1.3mg, 2.6mg (4 hourly)
- Palladone SR capsules 2mg, 4mg, 8mg, 16mg, 24mg (12 hourly)

6 Dextromoramide (Palfium) and pethidine have a short duration of action. They are useful for painful procedures but should not be used regularly for