

## The following medications and dose guidelines are recommended for symptom management in the last days of life

Symptom	PRN medication dose range and charting	Strength	Packaged as a box of	How long does it take for subcut medication to work?	Common side effects
Pain (if opioid naïve)	Rx <b>Morphine</b> 2.5-5mg subcut q4 hourly PRN for pain	10mg/1ml	5 ampoules	20 mins to take effect, peaks around 30-60 minutes.	constipation, nausea and vomiting, dry mouth, itchy skin, drowsiness, confusion
	Rx <b>Oxycodone</b> 2.5-5mg subcut q4 hourly PRN for pain	10mg/1ml	5 ampoules	20 mins to take effect, peaks around 30-60 minutes	constipation, dry mouth, nausea and vomiting, drowsiness, confusion.
Distress, agitation or restlessness	Rx <b>Midazolam</b> 2.5-5mg subcut q4 hourly PRN. Also may be prescribed as a nasal spray – 1-2 sprays ien q1h	15mg/3ml	5 ampoules	5-10 minutes to take effect	can irritate the skin - give slowly, drowsiness, forgetfulness
Respiratory Tract Secretions	Rx <b>Hyoscine N-Butylbromide</b> 20mg subcut q4 hourly PRN for secretions	20mg/1ml	5 ampoules	rapid acting, lasts about 2 hours	dry mouth, blurred vision, rash, drowsiness, agitation
Nausea or Vomiting	Rx <b>Levomepromazine</b> 2.5mg-5mg subcut q8 hourly PRN for nausea or vomiting	25mg/1ml	10 ampoules	60 mins to take full effect	drowsiness, rash, dry mouth
	Rx <b>Olanzapine wafers</b> 2.5-5mg sublingually at night	5mg	10 tablets	10 minutes	Drowsiness
Breathlessness	Rx <b>Morphine</b> 2.5-5mg subcut q4 hourly PRN for breathlessness	10mg/1ml	5 ampoules	20 mins to take effect, peaks around 30-60 minutes.	as above
	Rx <b>Oxycodone</b> 2.5-5mg subcut q4 hourly PRN for breathlessness	10mg/1ml	5 ampoules	20 mins to take effect, peaks around 30-60 minutes.	as above

### Indications for initiating a syringe driver:

- Symptoms not controlled by ongoing PRN medications (i.e. more than 3 doses of PRN medications in 24 hours)
- Inability to swallow, poor absorption of oral medicines, multiple symptoms
- For advice about dosing or starting or adjusting a syringe driver, contact Arohanui Hospice or the Hospital Palliative Care Team
- Note: If a person is already on regular opioids, the dose range may be different from above
- PRN medication should be used alongside a syringe driver for symptom management - calculate the appropriate opioid PRN dose using 1/6 of the total daily dose of opioid in the syringe driver