

GP Key messages: Syringe driver service change in South Derbyshire Nursing Homes during COVID-19

The manufacture of palliative care pre-filled syringes from Derby Hospitals Pharmacy for South Derbyshire Nursing Homes ceased on the 24/05/2020. The homes have moved to bedside syringe driver medication mixing. This was reviewed, and in view of COVID-19 pressures, it was agreed that the service change remained a high priority more than ever to ensure that the hospital can focus on acute services.

Support nurses are now available Monday to Friday to provide refresher training sessions and individual support to South Derbyshire homes. The support service is being hosted by Treetops Hospice until May 2021. The nurse visits to the Nursing Home should be seen as essential where there is a patient in immediate need of a syringe driver and any general training requirements and ongoing support from this service will be done virtually where possible.

Support nurse contact details – Katie Gibbins; email address kgibbins@treetopshospice.org.uk, mobile number 07887934069 and Faye Thrasivoulou; email address fthrasivoulou@treetopshospice.org.uk

To aid the transition and ensure that it is safe and efficient we recommend doing the following;

- Use as guide (GP symptom management section) <https://derbyshire.eolcare.uk/>
- Follow the procedure for community patients i.e. sending scripts to community pharmacies
- Electronic prescriptions would be preferred over paper scripts to expedite receipt of medications
- When prescribing controlled drugs and water for injections on the same script please ensure that the “personally administered” box is unticked as this stops scripts from transmitting electronically
- If the nominated pharmacy needs to be changed to ensure stock is available, it will need to be changed back after the prescription has been generated if appropriate.
- When initiating a syringe driver, document in the patients clinical notes and care plan that the syringe driver administration chart supersedes the anticipatory medicines label. This allows the home to use stock already supplied for the patient e.g. if anticipatory medication stock is similar to medications needed to prepare a driver
- Encourage the Nursing Homes to refer to the FAQ that they have been sent
- Encourage the Nursing Homes in the South of the County to contact the syringe driver support nurses (see above for contact details)
- Signpost nurses to these pre-recorded training videos
 - How to insert a cannula <https://youtu.be/0xJnFAwDmn0>
 - How to give anticipatory/just in case medication subcutaneous <https://youtu.be/v0vcpwM35ew>
 - Setting up a syringe pump using a load and prime technique <https://youtu.be/E4d2Mwlgvwg>
 - Drawing up medication https://youtu.be/PGO_ANtnPTA

- Consumables needed to set up a syringe driver
<https://youtu.be/LPYENZORhso>

Nursing Homes will no longer be getting a supply of consumables for setting up syringe drivers from the hospital. Some of these items are prescribable so you may start to get requests for; tape, packs of gauze and clearview film dressings for securing the cannula. Please see appendix 1 for full list.

Nursing Homes have been asked to ensure they have access to a pump. All homes are being contacted individually to be advised on how best to do this as a short-term loaning system is being arranged

Appendix 1

Suggested Syringe Driver consumables Stock**Key**

Prescribable – if prescribed, needed for each patient

Order from normal supplier of choice e.g. Care Shop - On Line or Health Care Services

- 1 x McKinley T34 syringe pump +cover+ key to unlock driver
- 10x Batteries (Duracell 9v batteries)
- 25x Stafa Intima (BD Saf-T-Intima safety system (cannula) 22GA 0.9 by 19mm)
- 50x lines (extension set (line) 100cm length)
- 5x 30ml syringes (BD Platipak 30ml syringes leur lock)
- 20x 20ml syringes (BD Plastipak 20ml syringes leur lock)
- 5x 3 ml syringes (for drawing up small amounts of medication)
- 5x 5ml syringes (for drawing up small amounts of medication)
- 20x 1ml syringes (for drawing up small amounts of medication)
- **As needed x Clearview film dressings for securing the cannula**
- 20x red needles Sol M Blunt needles 18g
- 20x dressing packs
- 10x sheet of labels
- Sharps bins