

T34 or BodyGuard Syringe Driver

What is a syringe driver?

A syringe driver is a small, portable, battery operated pump, which pushes a syringe filled with medicine slowly over 24 hours.

A long thin tube (called a line) is connected to the syringe, with a safety cannula (a plastic needle-free device inserted subcutaneously (just under the skin) at the other end.

Your doctor or nurse will insert the safety cannula, usually in your upper outer arm, outer thighs or abdomen. A safety cannula can also be inserted into the upper back region if someone is confused or agitated.

A clear dressing is placed over the safety cannula to keep it clean, dry and in place this enables you to spot any early signs of redness, swelling or infection at the insertion site. Once the safety cannula is in place you should not feel it and it can stay there for up to a week.

The medicine your doctor prescribed to help your symptoms, will be reviewed on a regular basis and may be changed if necessary.

Why do I need a syringe driver?

Syringe drivers 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 and it maybe not safe to do so.
- Others may feel sick, or vomit frequently so cannot keep tablets in their stomachs long enough for them to work.
- When symptoms are difficult to control by tablets alone, a syringe driver may be used until it is possible to re-start tablets.
- When symptoms associated with end of life are present receiving continuous medication via a syringe driver can keep you comfortable at home or in a care home if this is your preference.

Who will look after my syringe driver?

Your nurses at home, in hospital or care home will check your syringe driver regularly to make sure that it is working correctly, the safety cannula is comfortable and there are no problems with the medication. They will change the syringe each day, the line delivering the medication every 72 hours and the safety cannula once a week if it is working effectively.

Please be reassured that you do not need to do anything to the syringe driver.

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What do I need to look out for?

Your symptoms

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

Your skin

Sometimes the medicine in the syringe can cause a skin reaction. Your nurse will check the safety cannula site regularly. If the area becomes sore, the safety cannula will be re-inserted in another part of your body.

How will I know the syringe driver is working?

If the syringe driver is working normally, a green light next to the on/off button will flash every 8 seconds or so. If the driver has stopped for any reason, this light will turn red and you will hear a continuous alarm which indicates the medication is not being delivered.

If you notice any of the following, contact your nurse:

- 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 safety cannula 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 driver, unless instructed to by your nurse.

What else do I need to look out for?

- Syringe drivers are quite strong, but they can be damaged by dropping or being crushed.
- A syringe driver 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 syringe driver next to a heat pad, hot water bottle or electric blanket.
- Ask your nurse for advice on the best place to keep your syringe driver. You can get a fabric holder/bag to keep it in with long straps so that you can be mobile.

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Alarms and alerts

Please note, the points listed below are for your information only.

If the alarms sound, contact your nurse.

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.

Program completed:

The infusion is complete.

Syringe displaced:

The syringe has become dislodged from the driver mechanism.

Syringe nearly empty:

An intermittent alert will sound 15 minutes towards the end of the infusion (2 beeps every 2 minutes); the nursing team should be on their way to change the infusion.

Emergency contact details

Community Nurse: _____

GP: _____

Specialist Nurse: _____

Out of hours contact: _____