

## Oxycodone Prescribing Guidance

### Key messages:

- **Morphine is Sheffield's first-line strong opioid of choice in both cancer and non-cancer pain.**<sup>1,2</sup>
- **Oxycodone is no more effective as an analgesic than morphine.** Oxycodone should only be considered if morphine cannot be tolerated (e.g. due to vomiting, drowsiness, confusion, hallucinations) or in patients with moderate to severe renal impairment (eGFR < 30ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>).
- Side effects to morphine can be anticipated and managed:
  - Prescribe regular laxatives at an effective dose. Oxycodone may be more likely to cause constipation than morphine.
  - Nausea is likely to be transient but if persists, prescribe anti-emetic before switching strong opioids.
  - Mild drowsiness or impaired concentration may occur when starting a strong opioid or at dose increase, but it is often transient. It is an offence to drive if affected by medication ([drug-driving-law](#))
- To improve patient safety, it is recommended to prescribe solid oral preparations of oxycodone by brand. The preferred brand of oxycodone for use in Primary Care in Sheffield is:

**OxyPro® for Oxycodone Prolonged Release tablets**  
**Shortec® remains the preferred choice for short acting oxycodone immediate release capsules.**

- Oxycodone 10–13mg corresponds to approximately 20 mg morphine<sup>3</sup>. It is common practice to use a ratio of oral oxycodone 10mg = oral morphine 20mg.<sup>1</sup>

### Why brand prescribing for oxycodone?

**Incidents have occurred locally and nationally involving the administration of the wrong oxycodone formulation i.e immediate release capsules when modified-release tablets were intended and vice versa.**<sup>4</sup> NHS Sheffield CCG recommends brand name prescribing of oxycodone to reduce risk and improve patient safety.

### Why is Oxypro® being recommended?

Several branded generic oxycodone prolonged release preparations are now available with Oxypro® being more cost effective than the current preferred brand.

### Is this change happening in the hospitals/hospice?

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals will continue to prescribe oxycodone generically. Currently Sheffield Teaching Hospitals and St Luke's stock a different brand to what is prescribed in primary care.

### Oxypro® opening instructions

Oxypro® comes in childproof blister packaging. This means it is NOT possible to press the tablet out of the blister pack.

Watch this video: <https://www.oxypro-info.com/patient#how-to> or visit their website <https://www.oxypro-info.com>

1. Pull off a single dose by tearing along the perforated line on the blister
2. An unsealed area is exposed; this area is at the point where the perforated lines intersect with each other.
3. Peel away the cover foil from the bottom foil.



**If Oxypro® is unsuitable** e.g. patient finds packaging difficult to use, consider alternative brand such as Longtec® (liaise with patient and pharmacy).  
**Prescribe by a brand name to ensure continuity.**

### Tablet sizes and colour

- Oxypro tablets 5-40mg are identical in size to the originator brand, whilst Oxypro 60mg and 80mg tablets are slightly smaller.
- Oxypro tablets are the same colour as OxyContin® and Longtec® tablets.
- Oxypro® does not come as 120mg strength.



**For approximate dose equivalents (including breakthrough dose)** see manufacturers information and [Sheffield Palliative Care Formulary](#) PAGE 52. Conversion ratios are an approximation and are for guidance only. Initial dose conversions should be conservative; it is preferable to underdose and provide rescue medication for any shortfall. Ensure where a dose increase is intended, that the calculated dose is safe for the patient (in adult patients, Increases are normally in 30-50% steps).<sup>1</sup> The specialist pain or palliative care team should be consulted for advice in cases of complex pain management.<sup>4</sup>

**\*\*\*The patient should always be reviewed for signs of toxicity and inadequate analgesia during a conversion\*\*\***

For Chronic Non-Malignant Pain Guidance and other opioid resources e.g. Opioid tapering, see the Pain Section under [Prescribing Guidelines](#), Sheffield CCG.

### Oxycodone modified release tablets:

- Prescribe as **Oxypro®**. **The modified release tablets must be swallowed whole, not chewed, divided or crushed as this may lead to a rapid release and absorption of a potentially fatal dose of oxycodone.**

### Oxycodone immediate release capsules: 5mg, 10mg and 20mg capsules

- Prescribe as **Shortec®**. **Capsules are to be swallowed whole and must not be opened**

Oxycodone liquid: There are significant risks of overdose if a concentrate product is used in error for a normal strength product.<sup>4</sup>

- **Incidents have occurred where oxycodone CONCENTRATE LIQUID 10mg/ml was selected in error when oxycodone 'normal' strength LIQUID 1mg/ml was intended.**
- **Oxycodone liquid is available in both strengths as OxyNorm®, or more cost effective Shortec® liquid.**

### Oxycodone Injection

- Subcutaneous oxycodone should only be considered if:
  - Patients taking oxycodone orally are no-longer able to swallow / use the oral route,
  - Subcutaneous morphine cannot be tolerated due to side effects e.g. vomiting, drowsiness, confusion,
  - In renal impairment where eGFR < 30ml/min/1.73m<sup>2</sup>.
- Prescribe oxycodone injection by the 10mg/ml ampoule strength. Avoid excessive quantities by prescribing the 1ml ampoule (10mg/ml). This is on the stock list held by [pharmacies](#) commissioned to hold palliative care medicines.
- The 50mg/ml injection is rarely used. Only use after discussion with palliative care team. This strength will be required if PRN subcutaneous dose is greater than 25mg.

**Do Not Prescribe** Targinact® (oxycodone and naloxone) - non formulary

References: For manufacturer's information: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/>

1. [Sheffield Palliative Care Formulary 5<sup>th</sup> Edition](#). Accessed online 21.6.2021
2. [Prescribing in Chronic Non-Malignant Pain in Adults](#). Accessed online 21.6.2021
3. [Summary of product characteristics Oxypro®](#). Accessed online 21.6.2021
4. Safer Use of Controlled Drugs. Preventing Harm From Oral Oxycodone Medicines. Accessed 21.6.2021. <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20161107130748/https://www.cqc.org.uk/content/use-controlled-drugs>