

The importance of taking regular paracetamol

Paracetamol is a good pain relief medicine. It is important to take paracetamol regularly at therapeutic dose to get the most benefit and give the best pain relieving effect.

Spreading the doses of the paracetamol evenly during the day will help your pain the most. For most people this will mean only taking tablets when they are awake.

The maximum dose of paracetamol 500mg is two tablets four times a day (4g daily).

Combining tramadol and paracetamol

Paracetamol is often used with stronger pain medicine (analgesics) such as tramadol. This gives extra pain relief when required.

Taking paracetamol regularly with tramadol gives you best pain relieving effect. Your dose of tramadol can be stepped up and down depending on your pain. This means you to take the lowest effective dose of tramadol. This helps you get the most benefit from your tramadol and reduces the chance of side effects, tolerance or dependence developing.

Tramadol should not be taken with other opioids. For example morphine, codeine or paracetamol combination tablets (co-codamol or co-dydramol). If you are taking another opioid based medicine along with tramadol speak to your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist.

Reducing your tramadol

Do not stop tramadol suddenly if you have been taking it for a long time as this may cause withdrawal symptoms. Reducing the dose slowly will help stop this happening.

It is important to choose the right time to begin reducing your medicine. This should be when your pain is stable and you do not have stresses in your life.

How you could reduce your tramadol

You could try reducing your total daily dose by one 50mg capsule a week or discuss this with your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist

- If you take tramadol 50mg two capsules four times a day
Try reducing to tramadol 50mg capsules two in the morning, one and at lunchtime, two at teatime and two at night
- If you take tramadol 50mg one capsule four times a day
Try reducing to tramadol 50mg one capsule three times a day

If there are no problems then continue reducing slowly by one tramadol 50mg capsule every week. You can reduce more slowly than this too if needed

How you could increase your tramadol on days when your pain is worse

Do not take more than your prescribed dose. The maximum dose of tramadol is 400mg daily.

- If you take tramadol 50mg one capsule morning and night
You could increase to one capsule three or four times a day on days when your pain is worse
- If you take tramadol 50mg one capsule four times a day
You could increase gradually to two capsules for a few doses on days when your pain is worse

If tramadol makes you feel drowsy you should avoid driving or operating machinery. It is a criminal offence to drive a vehicle whilst unsafe due to medication use. This might be worse when you start the tablets and each time your dose goes up. Alcohol may make the sleepiness worse and should be avoided where possible.

Medication in chronic pain

The benefit from taking medication should always be more than any side effects you may have. Only **you**

- know how bad your pain is
- are able to say if your medicine is helping
- know what side effects you are having

It may take a few weeks or several trials of different medications to find the best combination for you and your pain. It may help to keep a diary of your pain and other symptoms. Side effects often become less once you have been on a medicine for a few days.

Please read the patient information sheet given with each medication. It gives more information about the medicine and any side effects.

You can discuss your pain medication with your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist. They can give you advice on which pain medicines may help. They can help you find the best way to take your medicines. They can advise you on putting your dose up safely if your pain is worse and on taking less medication safely when your pain is less.

If your medicine is not helping you may not need to take it. Please talk to your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist first. Some pain medicines should not be stopped suddenly.

Do not share or take other peoples medication. Always advise your doctor, pharmacist or pain specialist about any other medication or products you are taking for chronic pain. This includes anything bought from the pharmacy, herbal supplements or non- prescribed medicines.

Understanding how your medications work may help you to get the best pain relief from it with the least side-effects.



Taking regular Paracetamol with Tramadol

Patient Information Leaflet



GETTING YOU ON TRACK TO RECOVERY

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NHS Fife SMS text service number 07805800005 is available for people who have a hearing or speech impairment.

To find out more about accessible formats contact:
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