

# Morphine Myths

Morphine is an opiate used to relieve pain and manage difficulty breathing. A prescription is required to get morphine.

## Myths about Morphine

**Myth:** Morphine causes drowsiness and mental clouding.

**Fact:** When morphine is first started drowsiness and mental clouding are frequent side effects. They usually subside within 72 hours.

**Myth:** Morphine should only be given for severe pain.

**Fact:** Morphine is used effectively for the management of pain and difficulty breathing. As pain increases, the morphine dose can be adjusted upward to treat the increased pain. Morphine is considered the gold standard for three reasons:

**1.** It is effective and works quickly. **2.** It can be administered by many routes. **3.** It relieves pain and difficulty breathing.

**Myth:** Morphine is addictive.

**Fact:** Addiction is impaired control over drug use and can result in inappropriate medication use. Hospice patients taking morphine to control common symptoms such as pain or difficulty breathing is an example of appropriate medication use. This type of use is not considered addiction.

**Myth:** Morphine stops breathing.

**Fact:** Morphine is the drug of choice for managing difficulty breathing. Administering morphine allows the patient with difficulty breathing to rest more comfortably.

**Myth:** People who take morphine die sooner.

**Fact:** There is no evidence to support that morphine hastens death. Morphine is used to keep the patient comfortable. The timing of the patient death is dependent on the illness.

## Morphine Allergy

You can be allergic to morphine just like any other medicine. Report signs of allergy immediately to your Tidewell nurse and discontinue the medication. Side effects can be mild or extremely bothersome but do not always require stopping the medication.

### Signs of Allergy

- Swelling of the face and tongue
- Hives (itchy, red raised bumps on the skin)

### Side Effects

- Drowsiness or mental clouding
- Constipation
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Itching

**Call Tidewell if you have questions or concerns about morphine**

**(855) 843-3935:** \_\_\_\_\_