



Patient Information

Pethidine Injection for homebirths





This leaflet will provide you with information about pethidine. It will give you information about its supply and storage as well as administration and disposal should you decide to use Pethidine for pain relief during your homebirth.

What is pethidine injection used for?

Pethidine is a strong pain killer that is used to relieve pain during labour. It is given as an intramuscular injection. If required, it can be given up to a maximum of four times during labour, at intervals of 1-3 hours.

Pethidine will start to have an effect from 10 minutes after administration and the effects normally last up to four hours.

It can make some women feel sick, forgetful or drowsy. We offer you an anti-sickness medicine with the Pethidine to help with the sickness. Pethidine comes in glass ampoules.

Assessment

Pregnant women who decide to birth at home will have a discussion with their Midwife at 34-36 weeks gestation. At this appointment pain relief will be discussed including Pethidine. If you decide you would like to have Pethidine available this will be recorded in your electronic notes and homebirth assessment paperwork.

Your Midwife will then arrange a prescription to be completed, this may involve a phone call with an appropriately trained Midwife to complete the prescription risk assessment.

The Prescription will be for 2 glass ampoules of Pethidine to be given in a home birth setting. Any further doses in your labour would require a transfer to the Labour Ward.

The prescriber will send the prescription to the outpatient's pharmacy at the hospital, and you will be able to collect within a week.

Storage

Upon collection you are required to store the Pethidine at your home or the location you wish to birth if not your own home. Please be mindful to keep away from children and inform the Midwives when they attend where the Pethidine is stored.

Administration

The Midwife who attends your birth will administer the Pethidine when it is requested and will carry the equipment required to do so.

Disposal

If you have not used the Pethidine, then you will need to return it to a pharmacist who will be able to discard it for you safely.

Side effects

Common side effects include:



- Dizziness
- Drowsiness
- Headache
- Constipation
- Feeling sick (nausea) and vomiting

Most babies do not have side effects from the pethidine, however there is a chance that some babies do. As such, we only offer 2 doses at home to reduce this risk.

If a baby shows signs of increased sleepiness (more than usual), breathing difficulties, difficulty breastfeeding or limpness then seek medical attention or advice immediately.

It is safe to breastfeed after having used Pethidine during labour.

Birth pool and Pethidine

Pethidine can be used alongside Gas and Air in labour, however using a birth pool is not recommended for two hours after administration of Pethidine due to the effects of drowsiness.

If you require further information please speak to your midwife.

We encourage patients to be involved in their care by:

1. Being part of the conversation and shared decision making
2. Asking questions if something is not clear
3. Speaking up if you have concerns

Checks are there to protect you and you can be part of them. Behave with respect and kindness towards healthcare professionals.

We ask for information about you so that you can receive proper care and treatment. This information remains confidential and is stored securely by the Trust in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018/GDPR. Further guidance can be found within our privacy notice found on our Trust website: www.mkuh.nhs.uk

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