

Take the temperature of opioid pain medicines

In persistent pain, using opioid pain medicines, such as codeine, tramadol and morphine for more than a few months, has not been shown to be helpful.

As doses increase above the equivalent of 120mg oral morphine per day, there is a much greater risk of harm and little extra pain relief.

Harms can include:

- Muddled thinking
- Poor sleep
- Depression
- Dizziness
- Weight gain
- Headaches
- Tiredness
- Mood changes
- Vision changes

Opioids can even make pain worse.

Use this thermometer to check the dose.

The higher the dose, the greater the risk of problems. If more than one opioid is being taken, the total dose will be even further up the thermometer.

Wherever the dose is on the thermometer, if there are side effects or any other concerns about pain medicines, it should be reported to the healthcare team. People using pain medicines are recommended to have a review at least once a year.

Medicines that are not helping should be carefully reduced and stopped, even if there are no alternative medicines to try.

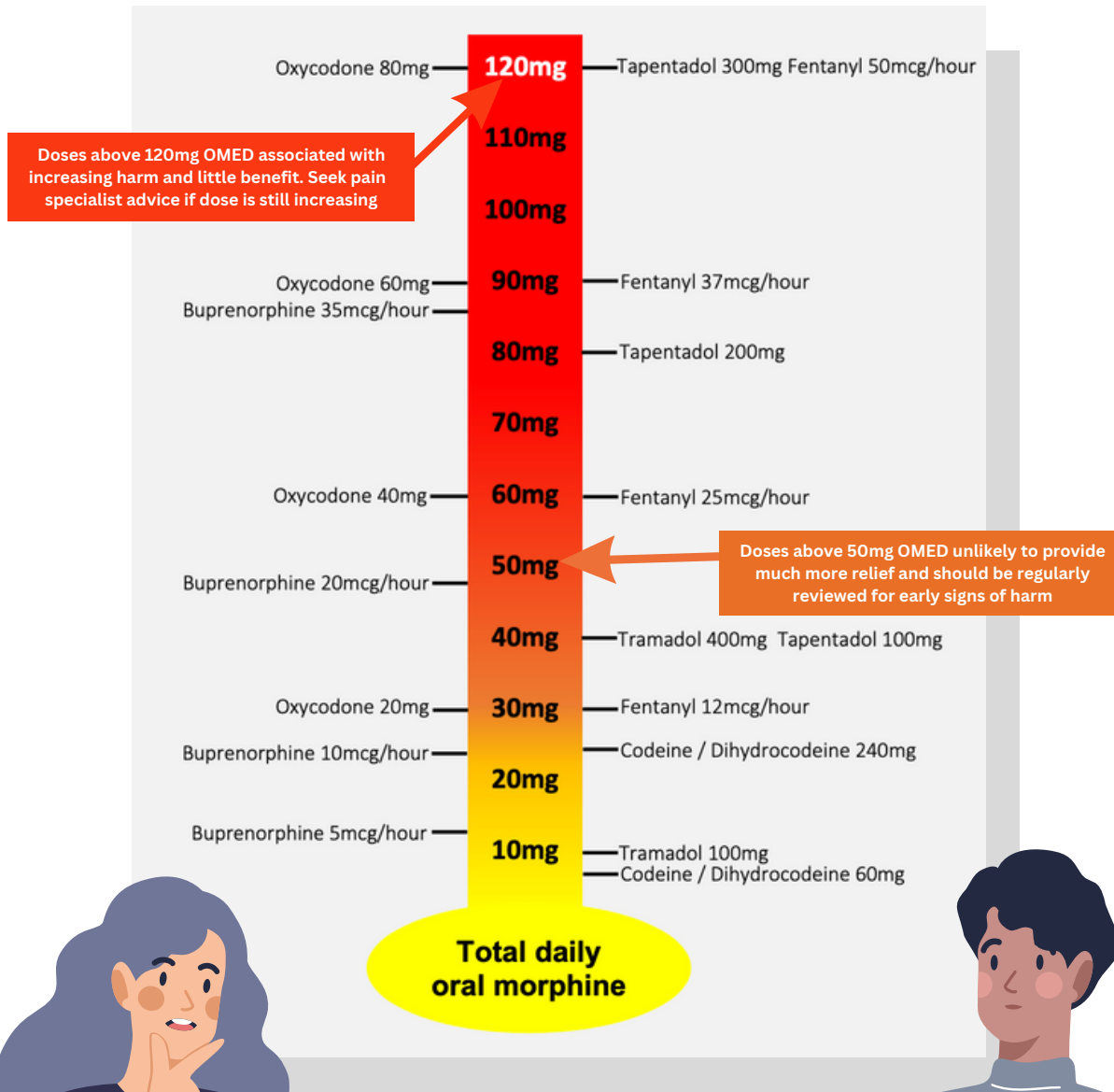
For more information and ideas on other ways to manage persistent pain, visit www.livewellwithpain.co.uk

The opioid thermometer is intended for illustrative purposes and should not be used to assist with conversions between opioid medicines.

All equivalences are approximate; there can be significant inter-patient variability.



Thermometer and text: © Live Well with Pain 2023
based on an original design by N Barnard and C Davies, 2010



Conversion values taken from Faculty of Pain Medicine, Opioids Aware <https://www.fpm.ac.uk/opioids-aware> April 2023 Updated with support from colleagues in the Scottish Pain Pharmacy Network



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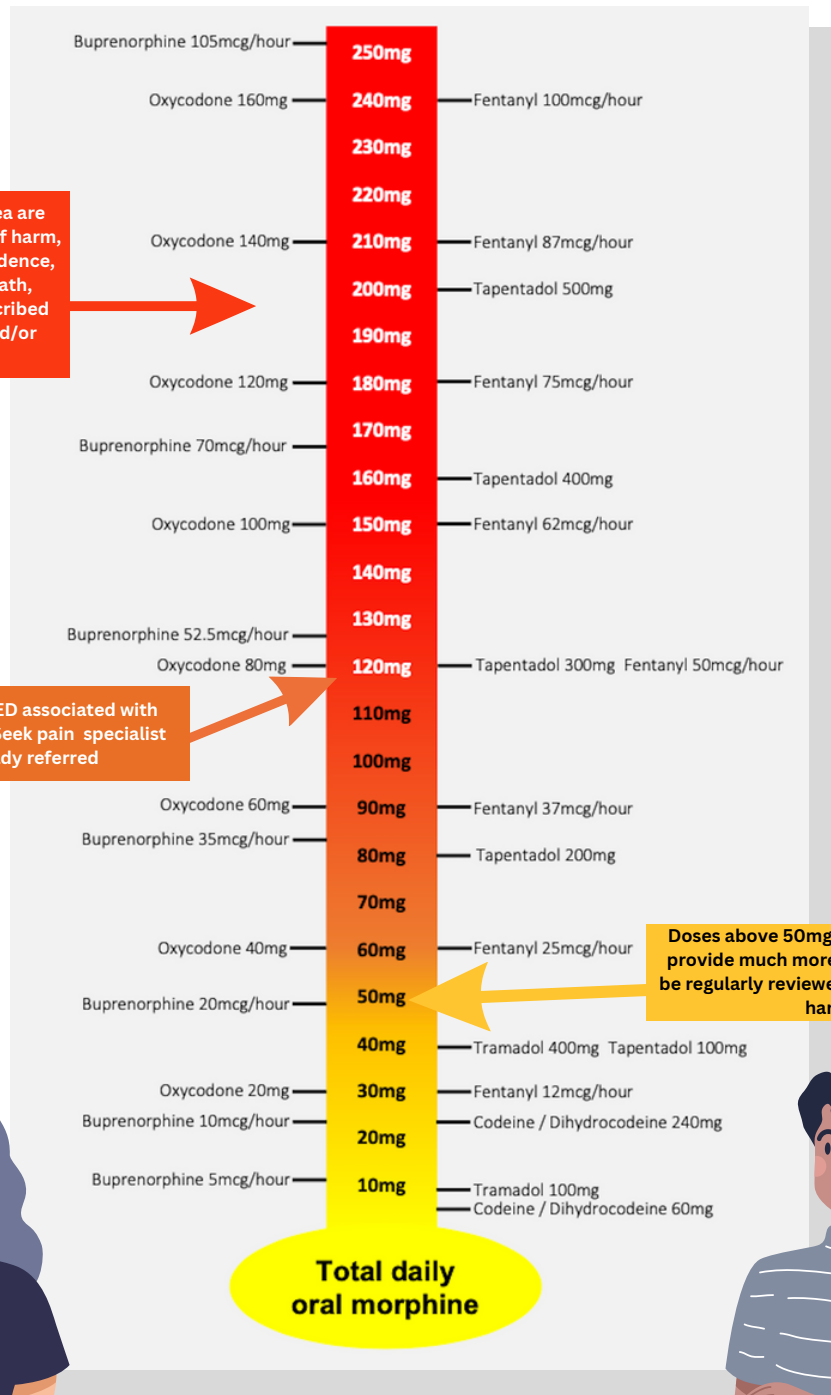
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Doses in the red area are associated with high risk of harm, including problem dependence, toxicity and sudden death, especially when co-prescribed with gabapentinoids and/or benzodiazepines

Doses above 120mg OME associated with rapidly escalating harm. Seek pain specialist advice if not already referred

Doses above 50mg OME unlikely to provide much more relief and should be regularly reviewed for early signs of harm

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