

A patient's guide to *Shortec*[®] capsules

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Shortec[®] 

Immediate release oxycodone hydrochloride capsules

THINK SHORT ACTING OXYCODONE

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Contents

General information

What is Shortec [®] ?	4
Why have I been prescribed Shortec ?	4
Why has my medicine changed?	4-5
Why is it a different brand name?	6

Pain

What is pain?	6-7
How can we treat pain?	8-9

About Shortec

What can I expect when I take Shortec ?	10-12
Can I drink alcohol when taking Shortec ?	12-13
Will I get any side-effects when I take Shortec ?	13-17
What if I am pregnant?	18
Who should not take Shortec ?	18-20

More Information

Further reading	21
Useful websites	21

What is *Shortec*?

Shortec capsules are a pain-reducing drug, belonging to a family of drugs called opioids.

Why have I been prescribed *Shortec*?

You have been prescribed **Shortec** capsules to help manage your pain.

Why has my medicine changed?

The name of your medicine may have changed from **OxyNorm**[®] (oxycodone)

capsules to **Shortec** (oxycodone) capsules. Your medicine has not actually changed, only the brand name and packaging have altered. **Shortec** capsules are identical to **OxyNorm** capsules, they both contain the same active ingredient (oxycodone), are the same size and colour, and are manufactured on the same production line, so there shouldn't be any effect on your treatment.

If you were taking a different oxycodone product before, the active drug is still the same. Your doctor will advise you of any changes you may need.

Why is it a different brand name?

The same medicine is often sold under more than one brand name. Different manufacturers have different brand names. Sometimes the same manufacturer produces identical medicines, but with different brand names.

What is pain?

Pain is an unpleasant sensation often associated with damage to the body as a result of injury or disease. We all know how it feels to be in pain, and that it can vary from being a slight niggle to being unbearable.

There are two main types of pain:

- **Acute pain** usually starts suddenly and lasts for a short period of time, e.g. until an injury heals.
- **Chronic pain** is pain that persists for a longer period. It may be caused by an initial injury or an ongoing disease such as arthritis. In some people, the pain may not be related to any past injury or damage.

Pain cannot be seen, and it is difficult to measure. This presents a challenge to your doctor when trying to treat your pain. Only you know how bad your pain is and how it affects your life.

For you, the challenge is to communicate this effectively to your doctor or nurse to help them understand so they can help you in the best way possible.

How can we treat pain?

Your pain is individual, and it may take several attempts to find the right treatment approach for you. This may include medicines or other pain management strategies. A number of approaches to manage pain, in addition to traditional drug treatment and physiotherapy, are listed below.

NON-MEDICINE PAIN MANAGEMENT

Strategies for non-medicine pain management include:

- applying heat or cold to the painful area;
- massage/rubbing;
- distraction;

- relaxation techniques;
- TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation; a device that delivers small electrical pulses to the painful area through electrodes placed on the skin);
- pacing your daily activities in order to balance exercise with rest;
- acupuncture/complementary therapies.

These strategies can be used alongside **Shortec** and other pain medicines. You should, however, always discuss any treatment options with your doctor first.

What can I expect when I take *Shortec*?

When you are taking **Shortec** capsules, once you and your doctor have found the dose that's right for you, you can expect that your pain should be reasonably well controlled and you are able to get on with your daily activities. If you find that your pain is still uncontrolled, you should go back and see your doctor.

DRIVING AND USING MACHINES

These capsules may cause a number of side-effects such as drowsiness which could affect your ability to drive or use machinery (see pages 13-17 for a full list of side-effects). These are most noticeable when you first start taking the tablets, or when changing to a higher dose. If you

are affected you should not drive or use machinery.

This medicine can affect your ability to drive as it may make you sleepy or dizzy. Do not drive while taking this medicine until you know how it affects you. It is an offence to drive while you have this medicine in your body over a specified limit unless you have a defence (called the 'statutory defence'). This defence applies when the medicine has been prescribed to treat a medical or dental problem, and you have taken it according to the instructions given by the prescriber and in the information provided with the medicine.

Please note it is still an offence to drive if you are unfit because of the medicine

(i.e. your ability to drive is being affected).

Details regarding a driving offence concerning driving after drugs have been taken in the UK may be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law>.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure whether it is safe to drive while taking this medicine.

Can I drink alcohol when taking *Shortec*?

Drinking alcohol during your treatment may make you sleepy or increase the risk of serious side-effects such as shallow breathing. It is recommended not to drink alcohol while you are taking **Shortec**

capsules Just like other opioid pain-reducing drugs, you may find that you experience side-effects when you take **Shortec** capsules.

Will I get any side-effects when I take *Shortec*?

The most serious potential side-effect is a condition where you breathe more slowly or weakly than expected (respiratory depression). Tell your doctor immediately if this happens to you.

The most common side-effects, affecting 1% or more of people taking **Shortec** capsules, are:

- constipation;

- feeling or being sick;
- drowsiness;
- dry mouth;
- loss of appetite;
- indigestion;
- abdominal pain or discomfort;
- diarrhoea;
- headache;
- confusion;
- a feeling of unusual weakness;
- dizziness;
- anxiety;
- nervousness;
- shaking;

- difficulty in sleeping;
- abnormal thoughts or dreams;
- difficulty in breathing or wheezing;
- shortness of breath;
- decreased cough reflex;
- rash;
- itchy skin;
- sweating;
- depression;
- lack of energy and tiredness.

All medicines can cause allergic reactions, although serious allergic reactions are rare. Tell your doctor IMMEDIATELY if you get any:

- sudden wheeziness;

- difficulties in breathing;
- swelling of the eyelids, face or lips;
- rash or itching, especially those covering your whole body.

As with all strong painkillers, there is a risk that you may become addicted or reliant on these capsules.

Addiction can cause withdrawal symptoms when you stop taking this medicine. Withdrawal symptoms can include restlessness, difficulty sleeping, irritability, agitation, anxiety, feeling your heartbeat (palpitations), increased blood pressure, feeling or being sick, diarrhoea, loss of appetite, shaking, shivering or sweating. Your doctor will discuss with you how to gradually reduce your dose before

stopping the medicine. It is important that you do not stop taking the medicine suddenly as you will be more likely to experience withdrawal symptoms.

Reporting of side-effects

If you get any side-effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side-effects not listed in the package leaflet. You can also report side-effects directly via the Yellow Card Scheme at: **www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard**. By reporting side-effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.

What if I am pregnant?

Do not take **Shortec** capsules if you are pregnant, think you might be pregnant or while you are breastfeeding. Doing so may affect your baby and could lead your baby to become dependent and experience withdrawal symptoms after birth which may require treatment.

Who should not take Shortec?

Do not take **Shortec** capsules:

- if you are allergic (hypersensitive) to oxycodone, or any of the other ingredients in the capsules (the 5 mg

capsules contain sunset yellow (E110) which may cause allergic reactions);

- if you have breathing problems, such as breathing more slowly or weakly than expected (respiratory depression);
- if you suffer from a severe lung disease;
- if you suffer from chronic bronchial asthma;
- if you have a condition where your small bowel does not work properly (paralytic ileus);
- if you have a condition where your stomach empties more slowly than it should (delayed gastric emptying) or you have severe pain in your abdomen;
- if you suffer from a condition known as cor pulmonale. In this condition,

the right side of the heart becomes enlarged due to increased pressure inside blood vessels in the lungs, after long-term lung disease;

- if you have moderate to severe liver problems;
- if you have ongoing problems with constipation;
- if you are under 18 years of age.

Further reading

For more information about **Shortec**, please read the patient information leaflet. A copy is available with your **Shortec** capsules, or from your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Useful Website

- Versus Arthritis:
www.versusarthritis.org/
- BackCare
www.backcare.org.uk/
- Cancer Research UK
www.cancerresearchuk.org



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