

# Vitamin C in Pain Management

**This leaflet aims to answer your questions about taking vitamin C to help treat your pain. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a pharmacist or specialist pain nurse caring for you.**

## **What is vitamin C?**

Our bodies cannot make vitamin C so it is vital we include it in our diet. The recommended daily intake is between 40 and 80mg. There is some evidence that taking much higher doses of vitamin C can help prevent nerve related pain in your arms or legs. This pain is often burning, sharp, stabbing or stinging.

Our pain teams or consultant orthopaedic surgeons may recommend high dose vitamin C for some patients at risk of having this pain.

## **How do I take the medicine?**

The recommended dose is 500mg to 1000mg daily for 45 to 50 days and your doctor, pain nurse or pharmacist will tell you the dose that is right for you. High dose or high strength vitamin C is available over-the-counter with no need for a prescription.

## **What should I do if I forget to take the medicine?**

Take the vitamin C as soon as you remember, but do not take more than one dose in any one day.

### **Are there any side effects?**

High dose vitamin C does not normally cause side-effects. In rare cases it can cause stomach problems e.g. diarrhoea and flatulence.

### **Is there anything else I need to know?**

You should not take vitamin C if you have iron overload or have had this in the past. Make sure you store your vitamin C according to the instructions on the packaging.

All medication should be kept and stored out of the reach of children.

### **How do I get a repeat prescription?**

Vitamin C will not be prescribed for you in hospital. You can buy it from pharmacies, health shops such as Holland and Barrett or from supermarkets. The average cost for the effervescent or chewable tablets is around £3 for 20 tablets of 500mg or 1000mg.

Preparations of vitamin C that also include other ingredients such as zinc or rosehip are not recommended for pain management.

### **Contact us**

If you have any questions or concerns about taking vitamin C as part of your pain management, please ask your ward staff to contact the pain team, available Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

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## **Additional services**

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and

4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

**Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** [pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

### **NHS Choices**

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

**Web:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### **NHS 111**

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

**Tel:** 111

### **AccessAble**

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website ([www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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