

# Sativex to treat spasticity in multiple sclerosis

Neurology

Patient information

## What is this information about?

This information is about a drug called Sativex.

Sativex is an anti-spasticity medicine. It improves symptoms of moderate to severe spasticity in adults with multiple sclerosis (MS). Spasticity means your muscles are stiff, tight, or hard to move.

This information tells you what Sativex is made of, how to take it, and how to build up your dose until you are taking the right amount for you. It also tells you how to store it safely, and any side-effects to be aware of.

## Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because the doctors looking after you think that Sativex will help your symptoms of spasticity. Sativex is given to people who have tried other medicines that have not worked for them, but who have seen their symptoms improve after trying Sativex for 4 weeks.

Keep this information in a safe place in case you need to refer to it while you are taking Sativex, or if you want to share it with anyone living with you or caring for you.

## How does Sativex work?

Sativex contains cannabis from plants grown under strict rules. There is an exact amount of cannabis in Sativex that will help to improve symptoms of spasticity.

## How should I take Sativex?

You can spray Sativex under your tongue or on the inside of your cheek.

## How often should I use Sativex?

It may take some time before you find how much to use to get the most benefit from Sativex. This is different for different people. In trials, the usual number of sprays per day that people needed was 8. It is not recommended to take more than 12 sprays per day. Leave at least 15 minutes between each spray.

You should gradually increase the numbers of sprays you take for the first two weeks, until you reach the best dose for you. You do not need to use the maximum number of sprays if you feel that you need less than this.

Once you know the best dose for you, you can spread the doses through the day. You can decide when these will be depending on how Sativex works for you.

**You can always take more or less Sativex if:**

- Your spasticity symptoms change.
- You change any of your other medication.
- You get any bad reactions to Sativex.

You may find it useful to look at the table below, to see how to slowly build up your dose.

	Number of sprays		
	Morning (Between waking up and 12 noon)	Evening (Between 4pm and bedtime)	Total sprays each day
Day 1	0	1	1
Day 2	0	1	1
Day 3	0	2	2
Day 4	0	2	2
Day 5	1	2	3
Day 6	1	3	4
Day 7	1	4	5
Day 8	2	4	6
Day 9	2	5	7
Day 10	3	5	8
Day 11	3	6	9
Day 12	4	6	10
Day 13	4	7	11
Day 14	5	7	12

## How should I store Sativex?

Sativex comes in a small bottle with a protective cap. Until the cap has been opened, you should store the bottle in the fridge. When a new bottle is opened you should first press the spray three times into a tissue to get the spray ready and make sure that you are getting the correct dose.

## Should I keep taking my other anti-spasticity medication?

Yes. You should keep taking any anti-spasticity medication that has already been prescribed to you, like Baclofen or Pregabalin, when you start Sativex. Some people find that once they are on a stable dose of Sativex, they can reduce the dose of some of their other anti-spasticity medication. If you do this, make sure that it is with the support of the team that prescribes your medicines.

## Are there any side effects of Sativex?

The side effects of Sativex can include:

- feeling sick
- feeling sleepy
- dizziness
- tiredness
- diarrhoea (loose or runny poo)
- headaches
- a dry mouth.

Side effects tend to fade after a few weeks. You can reduce them by taking fewer doses as you adjust to the medication. Please ask the team that prescribes your medicines to guide you when you are stopping or reducing your medicine.

If you get soreness in your mouth from taking Sativex, you can avoid this by changing the part of your mouth you spray on.

## **Can I drive while I am taking Sativex?**

Driving or using machinery when you first start taking Sativex is not recommended until you are taking a stable daily dose.

## **Can anyone take Sativex?**

**No. Sativex is not recommended for:**

- Pregnant women.
- People under 18 years old.
- People with a history of psychotic problems.

## **Can I travel abroad with Sativex?**

This depends on the country that you are travelling to.

The legal status of Sativex varies between countries and you will need to check this before travelling abroad with this medicine. This includes any countries you are travelling through.

Driving while taking Sativex might be illegal in some countries.

## **Who can I contact for further information and advice?**

**You can contact the multiple sclerosis team on:**

**[uhsussex.mshpnc@nhs.net](mailto:uhsussex.mshpnc@nhs.net)**



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