

Penthrox use in outpatient gynaecology

Information for patients

This leaflet provides information about using Penthrox pain relief medicine for outpatient gynaecological procedures. It explains what Penthrox is, how it is used, its benefits, side effects you may have and when Penthrox should be avoided. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to speak to the team caring for you.

Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your name and date of birth and check your ID band. If you do not have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address. If we do not ask these questions, then please ask us to check. Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

What is Pentrox?

Pentrox is a pain-relieving vapour (tiny droplets in air), which can be breathed in through a device called a 'green whistle' inhaler. It contains a type of anaesthetic medicine called methoxyflurane in a much lower dose than in general anaesthetic. Pentrox is intended to reduce the amount of pain experienced rather than stop it completely.

What is Pentrox used for?

Pentrox is licensed for use in trauma pain, for example pulling bones back into place in the Emergency Department. It is increasingly being used as an 'off label' pain control option when undergoing planned procedures in outpatient gynaecology. 'Off label' means it is being used for a purpose not specifically listed in its license, where clinicians consider it appropriate and safe.

We offer Pentrox in outpatient gynaecology for procedures where average to severe pain can be expected. Not all patients will need Pentrox. It is available for those who find the procedure particularly uncomfortable or who would otherwise need a general anaesthetic.

How do I use Pentrox?

Pentrox is self-administered which means you have control of when to use it. There will always be a nurse or a doctor to supervise you using it.

Before the start of your procedure, you will be shown how to use the device correctly. The Pentrox device has a wrist loop that will be placed over your wrist. You hold the mouthpiece between your teeth with your lips closed around it. It has a fruity taste or smell that you will get used to as you breathe in.

Once Pentrox has started working for you, you can breathe it in from time to time when you feel you need more pain relief or continuously if you need to.

If you need stronger pain relief, there is a hole at the top of the clear part of the chamber, which can be closed with your finger to get a bigger dose of the painkiller. The greatest effect may take around 15 minutes.

Pain relief will continue for several minutes after stopping Pentrox. You may feel a little lightheaded or drowsy. If you become drowsy, you will be unable to hold the mouthpiece to your mouth. This stops you from breathing the vapour and allows the effect to wear off.

After you have completed your procedure, you will be given a green Pentrox paper wrist band which you must wear for 48 hours. We will also give you a patient alert card to take home. If you need general anaesthetic in the 48 hours after taking Pentrox, your anaesthetist will need to use a different type of anaesthetic.

What are the benefits of Pentrox?

- Strong short-acting pain relief which you self-administer
- You are in control
- It quickly disappears from the body so only needs a short recovery time
- Avoids the risks and recovery time involved with having a general anaesthetic.

What are the possible side effects of Pentrox?

Common side effects can include:

- headache
- dizziness and sickness
- dry mouth

- drowsiness
- tingling skin
- double vision
- flushing of the skin or skin irritation

Rare side effects can include:

- allergic reaction (malignant hyperthermia) – this is a condition where symptoms such as a very high fever, fast, irregular heartbeat, muscle spasms and breathing problems can occur after being given an anaesthetic
- liver or kidney damage – this is very unlikely with the low dose used in the outpatient setting

When should Pentrox be avoided?

Most patients can use Pentrox and your doctor will ensure that it is safe for you.

Pentrox should not be used if you:

- are allergic or have had a bad reaction to any anaesthetic given through a mask
- have a history or family history of malignant hyperthermia
- have serious kidney or liver damage
- have a change in your level of consciousness for any reason
- have recently had alcohol or recreational drugs
- have significant heart or circulatory problems
- have shallow breathing or difficulty in breathing
- have recently taken or are taking certain medications such as strong painkillers or sedatives

Going home

The effects of Pentrox wear off very quickly and if you feel well, you should be able to go home straight after your procedure. However, sometimes you might need a bit more time to feel back to normal. If this is the case, we ask that you stay in the department for 30 minutes. This will either be in our recovery area or waiting room. Refreshments will be available.

Please note: you should not drive or operate heavy machinery for 24 hours.

Contacting us

If you have any queries or concerns regarding your appointment, please do not hesitate to contact us:

King's College Hospital patients

Gynaecology Ambulatory Unit, Suite 8, Golden Jubilee Wing, King's College Hospital

Nurse in charge tel: 020 3299 0456, available 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Outside these hours call: 020 3299 5936

PRUH and South Sites patients

Colposcopy Unit, Orpington Hospital

Tel: 01689 862029, available 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday



Image: Picture of a Pentrox 'green whistle' inhaler. Credit: adapted from Hanzys (Wikimedia Commons) – licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International.

MyChart

Our MyChart app and website lets you securely access parts of your health record with us, giving you more control over your care. To sign up or for help, call us on 020 3299 4618 or email kings.mychart@nhs.net. To find out more visit www.kch.nhs.uk/mychart

Sharing your information

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has partnered with Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust through the King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas' hospitals. King's College Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trusts share an electronic patient record system, which means information about your health record can be accessed safely and securely by health and care staff at both Trusts. For more information visit www.kch.nhs.uk.

Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your doctor or nurse if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

Tel: 020 3299 4618

Email: kings.pals@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Interpreting and Accessible Communication Support on 020 3299 4618 or email kings.access@nhs.net

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