

TRAMADOL

Tramadol is a synthetic opioid with effects similar to those of codeine.

Like all opioids, tramadol can be addictive if taken for a long time.

Other mechanisms that contribute to its analgesic effect are inhibition of neuronal re-uptake of noradrenaline as well as increased serotonin release.

Seizures are more common with tramadol overdose than with other opioids and occur in up to 15% of cases.

Tramadol overdose can cause potentially fatal serotonin syndrome. This is more likely to occur with co-administration of another drug that increases serotonin activity, e.g. antidepressants.

CCG Formulary Recommendations

Weak opioids: codeine, dihydrocodeine

Strong opioids: modified release morphine

Oxycodone: in patients who cannot tolerate morphine or with severe renal impairment (< 30mls/min).

Transdermal buprenorphine and fentanyl: only if patient meets specific criteria.

All opioids can be subject to misuse, abuse and diversion. **Lost scripts should not be replaced.**

Defined treatment goals should be documented in patient notes.

Formulary available [here](#).

Opioids are not suitable for chronic pain

Prescribers are advised to familiarise themselves with guidance recently published by the Royal College of Anaesthetists [Opioids Aware](#), in particular their advice on [long term pain](#).

Black dot interactions

Interactions listed in the printed BNF with a black dot, or online BNF in bold on a red back ground, are **potentially serious** and concomitant prescribing/administration of the drugs should be **avoided**.

Avoid prescribing tramadol with:

- Warfarin
- SSRIs - e.g. citalopram, dapoxetine, fluoxetine, sertraline
- Tricyclic antidepressants - e.g. amitriptyline, lofepramine
- MAOIs

Interactions with potential to increase serotonergic effects:

- Antidepressants - duloxetine, mirtazapine, venlafaxine
- Antipsychotics
- Atomoxetine

This is not a full list of all tramadol or opioid interactions, many other drugs increase the sedative or respiratory depressive effect of these drugs. Tramadol should not be considered a safer opioid based on its CD schedule.

