

## Tramadol Information for Patients – changes from 10<sup>th</sup> June 2014

Tramadol is a painkiller prescribed by your doctor for moderate to severe pain relief. As from 10<sup>th</sup> June 2014 tramadol is to be classified as a controlled drug (schedule 3); this letter provides some information on what this means for you as a patient.

### What is a controlled drug?

Some prescription medicines are controlled under the Misuse of Drugs legislation. These medicines are called controlled medicines or controlled drugs. Stricter legal controls apply to controlled medicines to prevent them being misused or being obtained illegally. For example, these legal controls govern how controlled medicines may be:

- stored
- produced
- supplied
- prescribed

### How does this affect me?

**Prescriptions for tramadol are now valid for only 28 days i.e. you must have your prescription dispensed at a pharmacy within 28 days of the prescription date.**

**In line with good practice guidance NHS BaNES CCG advises prescribers to limit prescription quantities for tramadol to 28 days' supply. If you have previously received a 2 month supply on prescription this will now be reduced to 28 days.**

If you're prescribed tramadol, it's particularly important that you:

- store your medicine properly and safely at home
- keep your medicine out of the sight and reach of children
- never give your medicine to anyone else

Special requirements apply to destroying controlled medicines, so return any unused tramadol to your pharmacist who will dispose of them.

Prescriptions for tramadol must include specific details about the medicine, such as:

- its name and what form it's in
- strength and dose
- total quantity or number of doses, shown in both words and figures

### Do I still need to take tramadol?

- Do not take tramadol for longer than you have been advised; your doctor will try to find the lowest dose of your medicine which can control your condition.
- If you are unsure whether you still need to be prescribed tramadol please discuss with your doctor or pharmacist. For some people different medicines may be more suitable.
- You should not suddenly stop taking tramadol unless advised to do so. If you want to stop taking tramadol, discuss this with your doctor or pharmacist first.

### Why have these changes to tramadol been made?

The legislation changes are in response to a review carried out by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) following an increasing number of reports within the NHS of tramadol's harms when misused, including an increase in deaths where tramadol was mentioned in the reports.

### Where can I get further information?

Your pharmacist or doctor can provide more advice if necessary. More information about controlled drugs is available on the NHS choices website at:

<http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/1391.aspx?CategoryID=73>