

Giving fentanyl (Actiq) lozenge - medicine for pain relief

Why does my child need to take a fentanyl lozenge?

Fentanyl lozenges are given as a strong medicine to provide rapid pain relief.

When should a fentanyl lozenge be used?

Fentanyl lozenges are prescribed for children who are already taking morphine or morphine-like medicine for breakthrough pain or incident pain. Sometimes a very rapid strong medicine is needed for breakthrough pain that comes on very fast and severely. The fentanyl lozenge provides extra pain relief when your child's pain occurs rapidly.

How much fentanyl lozenge should I give?

Fentanyl lozenges are on sticks and come in prescribed doses of 200, 400, 600 and 800 microgram sticks and 1.2 gram and 1.6 gram sticks. The dose will be prescribed according to your child's pain and the pain relief your child feels when using the lozenge. A second fentanyl lozenge can be given after 15 minutes if pain relief is not felt. Do not give a third dose without seeking advice from your health care team.

How should I give a fentanyl lozenge?

An information sheet comes with the prescription for fentanyl lozenges, and each comes in their own blister pack:

- Your child needs to hold the lozenge in their mouth between the gums and the inside of their cheek. The lozenge starts to dissolve when it is placed against the lining of the inside of their mouth and it is then absorbed into the blood stream. The lozenge does not need to be swallowed, but it is not harmful if this happens.
- Your child should move the lozenge around the inside of their cheek, using both sides of their mouth. This needs to be done quite slowly - it should take about 15 minutes to dissolve the whole lozenge. If this is done too quickly, more of the drug will be swallowed and it does not work as well.
- Your child should not bite, suck or chew the lozenge (biting or chewing the lozenge does not make it work faster).
- Your child may want to have a small drink of water before using the lozenge to moisten their mouth, but should not eat or drink while using it.
- Fentanyl lozenges should not be given if your child has mouth ulcers or their mouth is sore.



When should the fentanyl lozenge start working?

Your child should start to feel less pain five to 15 minutes after starting to use the fentanyl lozenge.

What side effects might my child experience when taking fentanyl lozenges?

Signs that your child has had too much fentanyl can include feeling sick, vomiting, slower breathing rate and being very sleepy. If any of these occur you should remove the lozenge from their mouth and contact your health care team for further advice.

Fentanyl lozenges may also cause:

- constipation
- rash
- headaches
- dizziness .

Whilst your child is taking a fentanyl lozenge they should be supervised.

Is there anything else that I need to know?

These lozenges should only be given to your child. If your child does not finish a lozenge, run the stick under hot water until the entire lozenge has dissolved. Dispose of fentanyl lozenge sticks carefully, where young children and pets cannot get them.

Contact details

If you have any questions about this information, please contact the Children and Young Person's Oncology Outreach and symptom care Nurse Specialist (CYPOONS) team at The Royal Marsden.

Tel: 020 8661 3625

Monday to Friday 9am-5pm

