



Medicine series

Practice details

Fentanyl patches

- Keep this leaflet safe, as you may need to refer to it again.
- Please ask your vet or veterinary nurse if you have any further questions.
- This medicine has been prescribed for your pet ONLY. Do not take it yourself or give it to another person or any other animal; it may harm them even if their symptoms appear to be the same.

The medication your dog or cat is receiving is called fentanyl and it is being given via a skin patch. The patches may have a trade name such as Durogesic DTrans®, Fentalis®, Matrifen®, Mezolar®, Osmanil®, Tilofyl® or Victanyl®, but often will just be called fentanyl patches.

What is a fentanyl patch?

Fentanyl belongs to a group of pain-relieving drugs called opioids. Fentanyl is a Controlled Drug and is therefore subject to certain legal requirements. Your vet will explain this to you. Fentanyl can be absorbed through the skin into the body. The skin patches contain a small reservoir of the drug that is slowly released into the body to provide pain relief.

Why has my pet been given a fentanyl patch?

Fentanyl patches are used to relieve moderate to severe pain. They are typically used after major surgery or on patients with severe chronic pain conditions. The drug in the patch usually works for about 3 days. However, there can be some variation between individual patients in how effective the patches are and for how long. Also, it may take several hours for pain relief to set in after the patch is first put on: on average, it takes 24 hours in dogs and 7 hours in cats. Other pain-relieving drugs are usually required during this period to ensure your pet remains comfortable. It is advisable to continue to monitor your pet for any signs of pain during the time the patch is in place. Common signs of pain include a hunched appearance and an unwillingness to eat or interact with people. If you are worried, please contact your veterinary practice.

How should I look after my pet while it has a fentanyl patch?

Ensure the fentanyl patch does not come into contact with any external heat source such as a radiator or heated surface whilst it is on your pet, as this will significantly increase the dose of fentanyl released from the patch and could cause an overdose. **Do not allow your pet to lick or chew a fentanyl patch.** The patch should be covered and your pet may need a special collar to stop them interfering with the patch and any surgical sites. Do not bathe your pet whilst they are wearing the patch. Your vet will also usually ask you to restrict the amount of exercise your pet is given. Fentanyl is a very potent respiratory depressant in people, i.e. it can stop a person breathing. **Therefore, great care is necessary to ensure that fentanyl patches are not applied to or ingested by any child or adult, or by any other animal.**

Can my pet have a fentanyl patch if they are already receiving other drugs?

Tell your vet if you are giving your pet any other medications, even if you think they already know. This includes herbal or off-the-shelf remedies from a pet shop, pharmacy or health store.

What are the possible side effects of a fentanyl patch for my pet?

Rare side effects of the patches include slow breathing, a slow heart rate and drowsiness (your pet may appear wobbly). If your pet shows any unusual symptoms whilst taking this medication, please contact your vet.

What should I do if my pet is unwell while taking fentanyl?

If your pet is unwell while receiving medication, contact your vet **immediately** for advice.

What should I do if a patch comes off?

Contact your vet as soon as possible because your pet will require alternative pain relief. Using **disposable gloves**, put the patch in a plastic bag and return it to the practice at the earliest opportunity. **Keep the patch in a safe place out of the reach and sight of children.**

What should I do if my pet accidentally ingests a patch?

Contact your own vet immediately because ingestion can result in an overdose of fentanyl. Abnormally slow breathing, a slow heart rate and drowsiness may occur.

What should I do if a person accidentally applies or handles an open patch or ingests one?

If a person applies or handles an open patch, the person should be taken to the local hospital **immediately**. Take this leaflet and any remaining patches plus their packaging (even if it is empty) with you.

Whom do I contact if I want to know more?

If you have any questions about this drug or concerns about your pet's health, contact your own vet. They will know your pet's medical history and will know about fentanyl patches.

The Prescribing Cascade

This medicine is authorized for use in human patients and is used by vets under the 'prescribing cascade'. The medicine is not authorized by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), for use in dogs/cats/pets. Your vet can explain the 'prescribing cascade' in further detail to you and also explain why they are prescribing this drug for your pet. You will be asked to sign a consent form stating that you understand the reasons that the drug is being prescribed and its possible complications, before the treatment is issued.

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