New Zealand Formulary
PATIENT INFORMATION

FENTANYL (patch)

fen-ta-nil

What does it do?

Fentanyl patches are used to relieve strong pain.

Before you start

- Tell your doctor if you have bowel problems, sleep apnoea, if you have ever had a seizure, or have had a recent head injury.
- Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding.

How should you use it?

Use *fentanyl* patches regularly as directed. Apply the patch to a clean, dry, hairless area of skin (such as the chest, back or upper arm) every 3 days. When you have removed the old patch, apply the new one in a different place to prevent irritating your skin.

What if you forget a dose?

If you forget to change the patch, remove the old patch and apply a new one as soon as possible.

Can you take other medicines?

Some medicines available without a prescription may react with *fentanyl* including:

- sedating antihistamines (e.g. Phenergan®)
- cough suppressants (e.g. Duro-Tuss®, Benadryl Dry Forte®)
- some migraine medicines, such as sumatriptan (e.g. Sumagran Active®)

Tell your pharmacist or doctor about all medicines or treatments that you may be taking, including vitamins, herbal products (e.g. St John's wort) or recreational drugs.

What side effects might you notice?

Side Effects	Recommended action
Slow or shallow breathing, hard to wake up Seizures	Tell your doctor immediately
Confusion, mood changes Seeing, hearing or feeling things that aren't really there Tummy pain (new or getting worse)	Tell your doctor
Constipation	Take your prescribed laxatives. Tell your doctor
Drowsiness, dizziness Nausea, vomiting, dry mouth or throat Itching, flushing, sweating Strange or uncontrolled movements Red or itchy skin where patch has been applied	Tell your doctor if troublesome

If you notice any other effects, discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

Other information:

- If *fentanyl* patches are not relieving your pain contact your health professional – your dose may need changing.
- *Fentanyl* patches may be used with other pain relievers (e.g. morphine, oxycodone).
- Make sure the patch does not come into contact with heat while you are wearing it (e.g. heat pads, hot water bottles, electric blankets, spa pools). Heat can cause too much *fentanyl* to get through your skin, and increases your chances of side effects.
- Dispose of *fentanyl* patches by folding the patch in half with the sticky sides together. Make sure to dispose of it out of the reach of children.
- *Fentanyl* may be addictive with long-term use.
- Long-term use of *fentanyl* may cause side effects such as less interest or trouble having sex, or changes in periods. It may also make some types of pain worse. Discuss with your doctor.
- If you have been taking *fentanyl* regularly for a long time, talk to your doctor before stopping.

This leaflet contains important, but not all, information about this medicine.
Prepared by the MyMedicines Committee at Christchurch Hospital, Te Whatu Ora - Waitaha, New Zealand. February 2026