

Fentanyl, Transdermal Patch

(fen-ta-nil)

Category: Opiate Analgesic

Other Names for this Medication: Duragesic®

Common Dosage Forms: Veterinary: None. **Human:** 12 mcg/hr, 25 mcg/hr, 50 mcg/hr, 75 mcg/hr, & 100 mcg/hr adhesive patches.

This information sheet does not contain all available information for this medication. It is to help answer commonly asked questions and help you give the medication safely and effectively to your animal. If you have other questions or need more information about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.

Key Information

- ▶ Narcotic pain relieving topical patch. May take several hours before it starts working. May provide pain relief for 3-5 days in dogs and cats.
- ▶ It is important to understand the proper method of applying the patch and keeping it secure.
- ▶ Usually tolerated well by animals. High doses can cause severe sedation, howling or whining, slowed heart and breathing rates. Skin rash is the most likely side effect when doses are not too high.
- ▶ Patches (whether new, on the animal, or used) must be kept away from children and used cautiously in households with young children or animals that could remove and ingest or be exposed to patches. Should accidental human skin contact occur with the patch, wash with **water only** (no soap or solvents).
- ▶ Dispose patch by flushing it down the toilet.

How is this medication useful?

Fentanyl is a narcotic drug for pain that is applied as a patch to slowly release the drug into the blood after being absorbed through the skin.

The FDA (U.S. Food & Drug Administration) has approved this drug for use in humans, but it is not officially approved for use in animals. The FDA allows veterinarians to prescribe products containing this drug in different species or for other conditions in certain situations. You and your veterinarian can discuss why this drug is the most appropriate choice.

What should I tell my veterinarian to see if this medication can be safely used on my animal?

Many things might affect how well this drug will work in your animal. Be sure to discuss the following with your veterinarian so together you can make the best treatment decisions.

- ▶ Other drugs can interact with this drug, so be sure to tell your veterinarian and pharmacist what medications (including vitamins, supplements, or herbal therapies) you give your animal, including the amount and time you give each.
- ▶ Tell your veterinarian about any conditions or diseases your pet may have now or has had in the past.
- ▶ If your animal has been treated for the same disease or condition in the past, tell your veterinarian about the treatment and how well it did or didn't work.

- ▶ If your animal is pregnant or nursing, talk to your veterinarian about the risks of using this drug.
- ▶ Tell your veterinarian and pharmacist about any medication side effects (including allergic reactions, lack of appetite, diarrhea, itching, hair loss) your pet has developed in the past.

When should this medication not be used or be used very carefully?

No drug is 100% safe in all patients, but your veterinarian will discuss with you any specific concerns about using this drug in your animal.

This drug **SHOULD NOT** be used in patients:

- ▶ That are allergic to it.

This drug should be used **WITH CAUTION** in:

- ▶ Very small dog breeds (ie, toy breeds), as accurate dosing may be difficult.
- ▶ Animals that are receiving other drugs that cause drowsiness.
- ▶ Households with young children. Fentanyl exposure can be very dangerous to young children.
- ▶ Pregnant animals.
- ▶ Animals that have a fever. These patients may absorb more of this drug across the skin and develop adverse effects.
- ▶ Cats that are very old, weak, or frail.
- ▶ Patients with respiratory disease as this drug may slow down breathing.

If your pet has any of these conditions or signs, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks versus benefits.

What are the side effects of this medication?

Side effects that usually are not serious include:

- ▶ Rash at patch application site.
- ▶ Cats: Dilated (large) pupils; mild excitement (rare).
- ▶ Dogs: Sedation, sleepiness.
- ▶ Constipation or difficulty urinating.
- ▶ Restlessness or mild agitation (anxious, nervous, agitated, unable to relax). Your veterinarian can prescribe a tranquilizer to help them get through this period if necessary.
- ▶ Slowed breathing and heart rate. Slowed breathing can decrease the ability of dogs to cool themselves. Do not allow your dog to become overheated while receiving this medication.

You don't have to be overly concerned if you see any of these unless they are severe, worsen, or continue to be a problem. Contact your veterinarian if this happens.

Side effects that may be serious or indicate a serious problem:

- ▶ Very slow breathing
- ▶ Inability to wake your pet up.
- ▶ Extreme agitation (rare, cats).

If you see any of these, contact your veterinarian immediately.

If my pet gets too much of this medication (an overdose), what should I do?

If you witness or suspect an overdose, contact your veterinarian or an animal poison control center for further advice. Animal poison control centers that are open 24 hours a day include: **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center** (888-426-4435) and **Pet Poison HELPLINE** (855-764-7661); a consultation fee is charged for these services.

How should this medication be given?

For this medication to work, give it exactly as your veterinarian has prescribed. It's a good idea to always check the prescription label to be sure you are giving the drug correctly.

- ▶ Your veterinarian will clip the fur from the area where the patch will be applied. Usually your veterinarian will apply the first patch and cover it with a loose bandage and write the date the patch was applied on the bandage. Most patches will last about 3-5 days. Patches tend to last longer on cats than dogs.
- ▶ Fentanyl patches should not be applied on the parts of the animal that will be touching the ground when they lay down. The increased heat and pressure from lying on the patch can increase the amount of drug released into the animal's bloodstream and increase the risk of adverse effects.
- ▶ Fentanyl patches require at least 12 hours on dogs and 6 hours on cats for the drug to take effect. Other pain relievers should be used during this waiting period to ensure your animal is pain-free. Talk with your veterinarian about what other pain relievers you can use.
- ▶ Heating pads should not be used where fentanyl patches are applied, as this can increase the amount of drug absorbed.
- ▶ Do not cut the patch.
- ▶ If you have difficulty getting your animal to accept the patch, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist for tips to help with dosing and reducing the stress of medication time.
- ▶ This medication can be given for various lengths of time. Be sure you understand how long your veterinarian wants you to continue giving this medication. Prescription refills may be necessary before the therapy will be complete, but a new written prescription will be required each time the drug is refilled.

What should I do if I miss giving a dose of this medication?

If you miss the time you were supposed to change the patch, remove it, and apply a new one when you remember and then wait the amount of time between doses recommended by your veterinarian before changing it again. Do not double-up or give extra doses.

How should I store this medication?

- ▶ Fentanyl transdermal patches should be stored at temperatures less than 77°F (25°C) and applied immediately after removing from the individually sealed package. Do not cut patches.
- ▶ Keep in a secure area away from children and other animals.

Can handling this medication be hazardous to me, my family, or other pets?

Once the patch is removed from the packaging, be careful not to allow the surface of the patch to contact your skin for more than a few seconds. If contact occurs, wash the area with water only; do not use soap or solvents. **Children must not be exposed to fentanyl patches** (new or used), as death or serious illness has occurred when children have been exposed to or eaten the patch. The FDA recommends the following:

- ▶ Keep fentanyl patches and other drugs in a secure location that is out of children's sight and reach as they may think the patch is a sticker, temporary tattoo, or bandage.
- ▶ Ensure the patch is covered with bandage material to prevent the patch from coming off your animal's body.
- ▶ Throughout the day, double check the patch is still in place.

If there is reason to suspect that a child has been exposed to a fentanyl patch, emergency medical help should be sought immediately.

How should I dispose of this medication if I don't use it all?

- ▶ Proper disposal of fentanyl patches, both used and unused, is very important, as they can be a safety hazard or used by human drug abusers. The FDA recommends disposing of used patches by folding them in half so that the sticky sides meet, and then flushing them down a toilet. They should not be placed in the household trash where children or pets can find them. The FDA recognizes there are environmental concerns about flushing medicines down the toilet; however, the FDA believes that the risk associated with accidental exposure to this strong narcotic medicine outweighs any possible risk associated with disposal by flushing. When the patches are no longer needed, disposal by flushing eliminates the risk of harm to people in the home.
- ▶ Do not save left over medication for future use or give it to others to use.

What other information is important for this medication?

- ▶ Fentanyl patches are a controlled substance in the USA and should not be used on anyone other than the animal for which it was prescribed. It is in the most restricted drug category, and your veterinarian will need to write a new prescription each time it is refilled.
- ▶ Use of this drug may not be allowed in certain animal competitions. Check rules and regulations before entering your animal in a competition while this medication is being administered.

If you have any other questions or concerns about this medication, contact your veterinarian or pharmacist.