



Fentanyl prescribing update



North of England
Commissioning Support

Partners in improving local health

Date: May 2019`

Fentanyl currently has varying pain control uses across the North East and Cumbria.

Current North of Tyne formulary listing:

<http://northoftyneandgatesheadformulary.nhs.uk/chaptersSubDetails.asp?FormularySectionID=4&SubSectionRef=04.07.02&SubSectionID=A100&drugmatch=1521#1521>

Fentanyl

BNF SPC BNF C

Alternatives

- Fentanyl 200 microgram lozenges with oromucosal applicator are only approved for limited short-term use in RVI burns unit and for the treatment of very severe incident pain on the advice of pain/palliative care specialists **GREEN+**.
- Fentanyl sublingual tablets (Abstral®) are also approved but only for patients experiencing incident pain during radiotherapy, restricted to palliative care use only **RED**.
- 12, 25, 50, 75 & 100 microgram/hour transdermal patches (**First choice brand - Mezolar®**) **GREEN**.
 - *Mezolar® has replaced Matrifen® as the first choice brand. Patients who currently use Matrifen® can continue to do so if managing well.*

Fentanyl transdermal patches:

Indications for their use:

Chronic intractable pain not currently treated with a strong opioid analgesic

Or Chronic intractable pain currently treated with a strong opioid analgesic

The current first line brand choice for fentanyl patch prescribing is **Mezolar®**. Branded prescribing is recommended to give the patient safe consistent product prescribing.

Should your patient currently be receiving Matrifen® branded patches then they may remain on this brand if stable.

Unlicensed use of fentanyl patches:

In clinical practice where small (less than 12 micrograms/hour) dose titrations are required for safe opioid management and to overcome short term supply issues, patches that are matrix formulation may be cut diagonally. However this procedure is unlicensed and specialist advice should be sought. Reservoir patch formulations must not be cut. The unused half of the patch should be disposed of safely and appropriately.

Primary care are receiving increasing requests to supply these “half doses” after discharge from secondary care for both palliative and non-palliative patients.

Produced by: Phillip Utting NECS Medicines Optimisation team for North Cumbria CCG
Contact details: phillip.utting@cumbria.necsu.nhs.uk

Have you seen the NECS Medicines Optimisation website?

<http://medicines.necsu.nhs.uk/>



Fentanyl prescribing update



North of England
Commissioning Support

Partners in improving local health

Date: May 2019`

This use is not currently noted in the NECN Palliative Care guidelines.

<https://www.nth.nhs.uk/content/uploads/2015/06/necn-palliative-care-guidelines-booklet-2016.pdf>

However this use is noted in the Scottish Palliative Care guidelines.

<https://www.palliativecareguidelines.scot.nhs.uk/guidelines/medicine-information-sheets/fentanyl-patches.aspx>.

If primary care clinicians are to continue prescribing please note the unlicensed use and that this conversation regarding their use has been had with the patient.

Safe disposal of fentanyl patches

October 2018 The MHRA produced an alert regarding the safe disposal of fentanyl patches due to some fatal overdoses especially around children, please see links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/transdermal-fentanyl-patches-life-threatening-and-fatal-opioid-toxicity-from-accidental-exposure-particularly-in-children>

Patient safety leaflet:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5bbdfd58ed915d732b992548/Fent-patient-sheet-FINAL.pdf>

Immediate Release Fentanyl:

Indication for use:

Breakthrough pain in patients receiving opioid therapy for chronic cancer pain

This formulation was mentioned in the NHSE guidance “items not to be routinely prescribed in primary care”.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/items-which-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed-in-pc-ccg-guidance.pdf>

Abstral® Immediate release sublingual tablets – to be used only in palliative care.

Actiq® Immediate release lozenges (lollipops) – to be used only in short term burns treatment and under palliative care specialist.

References:

<https://bnf.nice.org.uk/drug/fentanyl.html>

<https://medicines.necsu.nhs.uk/opioidresources/>

Produced by: Phillip Utting NECS Medicines Optimisation team for North Cumbria CCG
Contact details: phillip.utting@cumbria.necsu.nhs.uk

Have you seen the NECS Medicines Optimisation website?

<http://medicines.necsu.nhs.uk/>