



**Question: How many transdermal fentanyl patches can be applied at one time?**

**February 2012**

### **Summary**

There are two brands of matrix transdermal fentanyl patches currently available in Ireland, Durogesic DTrans<sup>®</sup> transdermal patches<sup>1</sup> and Matrifen<sup>®</sup> transdermal patches<sup>2</sup>. More than one patch may be used at a time<sup>1,2,3</sup> (but the transdermal patches should be applied at the same time to avoid confusion)<sup>3</sup>. Additional or alternative analgesic therapy should be considered if dosage requirements exceed 300 micrograms/hour.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

There is limited information available to support doses of transdermal fentanyl above 300 micrograms/hour. Skaer<sup>5</sup> reports the details of a multi-centre trial conducted by Donner et al<sup>6</sup>. The highest dose of transdermal fentanyl administered in this trial was 500micrograms/hour.<sup>5</sup> The use of transdermal fentanyl at doses above 300micrograms/hour is unlicensed.<sup>1,2</sup> Therefore, transdermal fentanyl should only be used at doses above 300micrograms/hour by practitioners with experience of its use. The patient should be monitored carefully during treatment.

#### **Palliative Meds Info: Terms and Conditions**

The information outlined above is intended for healthcare professionals only. The information outlined above is believed to accurately reflect the medical literature at the time of writing. Healthcare professionals must use their own judgment to determine the accuracy and relevance of the information. See [www.olh.ie](http://www.olh.ie) for full terms and conditions.

## References

- 1) Summary of Product Characteristics Durogesic DTrans Transdermal Patch. Available from [www.medicines.ie](http://www.medicines.ie). Last updated on the 02/12/2011.
- 2) Summary of Product Characteristics Matrifen Transdermal Patches. Available from [www.medicines.ie](http://www.medicines.ie). Last updated on the 31/01/2012.
- 3) Fentanyl. British National Formulary. Available from [www.medicinescomplete.com](http://www.medicinescomplete.com). Accessed February 2012.
- 4) Monograph Fentanyl. Martindale, the complete drug reference. Available from [www.medicinescomplete.com](http://www.medicinescomplete.com). Accessed February 2012.
- 5) Skaer TL. Transdermal opioids for cancer pain. Health and Quality of Life Outcomes 2006, 4:24.
- 6) Donner B Donner B, Zenz M, Tryba M, Strumpf M: Direct conversion from oral morphine to transdermal fentanyl: A multicenter study in patients with cancer pain. Pain 1996, 64:527-534.

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