



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

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There are two brands of matrix transdermal fentanyl patches currently available in Ireland, Durogesic DTrans® transdermal patches and Matrifen® transdermal patches. More than one patch may be used at a time.^{1,2,3,4} The transdermal patches should be applied at the same time to avoid confusion.^{3,4} Additional or alternative analgesic therapy should be considered if dosage requirements exceed 300 micrograms/hour.^{1,2,3,4} Fentanyl patches are available in the following strengths; 12 micrograms/hour, 25 micrograms/hour, 50 micrograms/hour, 75 micrograms/hour and 100 micrograms/hour.^{1,2}

There is limited information available to support doses of transdermal fentanyl above 300 micrograms/hour. Skaer⁵ reports the details of a multi-centre trial conducted by Donner et al⁶. The highest dose of transdermal fentanyl administered in this trial was 500micrograms/hour.⁵ The use of transdermal fentanyl at doses above 300micrograms/hour is unlicensed.^{1,2} 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.

References

- 1) Summary of Product Characteristics Durogesic DTrans Transdermal Patch. Available from www.hpra.ie. Accessed on the 06/02/2017.

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- 2) Summary of Product Characteristics Matrifen Transdermal Patches. Available from www.hpra.ie. Accessed on the 06/02/2017.
- 3) Monograph Fentanyl. British National Formulary. Available from www.medicinescomplete.com. Accessed on the 06/02/2017.
- 4) Monograph Fentanyl. Martindale, the complete drug reference. Available from www.medicinescomplete.com. Accessed on the 06/02/2017.
- 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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