

The Use of Alfentanil in a Syringe Driver in Palliative Medicine

**Warning : Alfentanil should not be confused with fentanyl.
To ensure safety alfentanil will be prescribed in milligrams.**

Indications for Use	Alfentanil may be used for patients: When problems are encountered with the administration of high volumes of other drugs. When the use of other opioids including morphine, oxycodone or hydromorphone is limited by side effects e.g. sedation, delirium, hallucinations. With renal failure: Stage 4-5 chronic kidney disease (GFR <30ml/min) or severe acute renal impairment.																											
Preparations	Alfentanil 1000 micrograms = Alfentanil 1 mg Rapifen® 500 micrograms/ml (a 2 ml ampoule contains 1000 micrograms) Rapifen Intensive Care® 5 mg/ml (1 ml ampoule contains 5000 micrograms)																											
Dose Conversion	Alfentanil is approximately 15 times as potent as subcutaneous (SC) morphine. 15 mg of Morphine SC is equivalent to 1 mg of Alfentanil SC. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>MORPHINE SC</th> <th>ALFENTANIL SC MG</th> <th>ALFENTANIL SC MICROGRAMS</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>7.5 mg</td> <td>0.5 mg</td> <td>500 micrograms</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15 mg</td> <td>1 mg</td> <td>1,000 micrograms</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30 mg</td> <td>2 mg</td> <td>2,000 micrograms</td> </tr> <tr> <td>75 mg</td> <td>5 mg</td> <td>5,000 micrograms</td> </tr> <tr> <td>150 mg</td> <td>10 mg</td> <td>10,000 micrograms</td> </tr> <tr> <td>225 mg</td> <td>15 mg</td> <td>15,000 micrograms</td> </tr> <tr> <td>375 mg</td> <td>25 mg</td> <td>25,000 micrograms</td> </tr> <tr> <td>450 mg</td> <td>30 mg</td> <td>30,000 micrograms</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	MORPHINE SC	ALFENTANIL SC MG	ALFENTANIL SC MICROGRAMS	7.5 mg	0.5 mg	500 micrograms	15 mg	1 mg	1,000 micrograms	30 mg	2 mg	2,000 micrograms	75 mg	5 mg	5,000 micrograms	150 mg	10 mg	10,000 micrograms	225 mg	15 mg	15,000 micrograms	375 mg	25 mg	25,000 micrograms	450 mg	30 mg	30,000 micrograms
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Breakthrough Doses	The use of alfentanil for breakthrough pain may not be suitable due to the short duration of action of alfentanil or because of a complex titration process. However, the prescriber may decide to prescribe PRN doses of alfentanil for breakthrough pain. Currently, an alternative opioid e.g. morphine, oxycodone or hydromorphone is used for breakthrough pain.																											
Hepatic Impairment	An empirical dose reduction may be necessary. In hepatic impairment, the half life and free fraction of alfentanil increase and the effect can be more prolonged and pronounced.																											
Renal Failure	Dose reductions are not usually required.																											
pH	4.0-6.0																											
Diluents	Sodium Chloride 0.9% or Water for Injection may be used.																											
Compatibility Information	Limited compatibility information. Alfentanil appears to be physically stable with most drugs used in syringe pumps, although there is a possible concentration-dependant compatibility issue with cyclizine. Incompatibilities between alfentanil and haloperidol have been reported by staff at OLH&CS. Please report any incompatibilities to the pharmacy.																											
Drug Interactions	Alfentanil can interact with other drugs. Please consult with the pharmacist. Please consult product information available from www.hpra.ie .																											
Issues for Discharge	Rapifen® 500 micrograms/1 ml and Rapifen Intensive Care® 5 mg/ml are not currently reimbursable on the medical card or Drug Payment Scheme. Therefore, the patient may have to incur the cost. Please liaise with the pharmacist or the patient's community pharmacy. Rapifen Intensive Care® (5 mg/ml) is an unlicensed preparation in Ireland. It is imported by wholesalers from the UK under a special license. Therefore, the continuous supply of Rapifen Intensive Care® cannot be guaranteed.																											

**Warning: Rapifen is available in two different strengths, in very similar packaging.
Please double check that you are administering the correct strength.**