

Alfentanil Spray

(unlicensed medicine)

Q. What is alfentanil spray used for?

- A. Alfentanil is an opioid analgesic (pain killer) that is used to help control moderate to severe pain. Alfentanil has a quick onset of action (time to effect) and a short duration of action (i.e. does not last very long).

Q. When do I use it?

- A. As alfentanil spray is absorbed through the nasal passages or through the mouth lining, it works much faster than other strong pain killers that you need to swallow, e.g. Sevredol or OxyNorm. Alfentanil spray, therefore, works well for episodic or incident pain. This is a predictable pain that is related to movement or activity e.g. getting washed or dressed, swallowing. It should start to work almost immediately and lasts 10 to 15 minutes.

Q. How do I assemble alfentanil spray?

- A. An alfentanil spray comes in two parts within a white cardboard box. There is an amber glass bottle containing alfentanil solution and a clear plastic bag containing three white plastic parts:
 1. The pump mechanism - a white cap, which will screw onto the glass bottle with a thin plastic tube coming out from each side.
 2. The mouth spray head - a spray button with a 2 inch (5.5cm) long delivery tube.
 3. The nose spray head - a round nozzle approximately 1 inch (3cm) long with a clear plastic cover.

Your Doctor/Pharmacist/Specialist Nurse will have told you which spray head you need. Only assemble your next spray just before you begin to need it.

Open the plastic bag and push the required spray head onto the shorter of the two plastic tubes of the pump mechanism. Open the glass bottle and screw the pump mechanism, plus spray head onto the bottle.

Q. How do I use alfentanil spray?

- A. Before the pump is used for the first time, it will need to be primed. This is achieved by fully depressing the spray head 2 to 3 times and this fills the pump mechanism. This only needs to be done when first setting up the pump, not before each use. To use the spray: mouth spray head - place the delivery tube inside the mouth and spray the required number of sprays onto the inside of the cheek. Alternatively, place the delivery tube under the tongue and spray the required number of sprays under the tongue. Nose spray head: insert gently into one nostril and spray the required number of sprays into the nostril. You can alternate sprays between both nostrils if you wish.

Q. How long will each bottle last?

- A. Each individual spray delivers 0.14mL of alfentanil and after priming, each bottle should deliver a further 32 – 33 sprays. For example, if your doctor tells you to use 2 sprays at a time the bottle will deliver 16 doses. The spray should only be used for one month once assembled. Any remaining solution should be carefully discarded down a sink or handed into your chemist for destruction.

Q. Are there any side effects from using alfentanil spray?

- A. The most common side effects associated with alfentanil spray are nausea, vomiting, constipation and drowsiness. If you experience any side effects tell your doctor.

Q. Can I drive?

- A. You may be able to drive but you must discuss this with your doctor.

Q. Can I drink alcohol?

- A. A small glass of wine, beer, sherry or whisky may help you feel better and improve your appetite. It is best to avoid taking more than this as you may become too drowsy.

Q. How do I obtain further supplies?

- A. Alfentanil spray is not readily available from Community Pharmacies as it is made as a special (unlicensed) item only by Torbay Pharmacy Manufacturing Unit in Devon and has to be purchased directly from them by any Pharmacy wishing to fulfil a prescription. Please bear in mind that your family Doctor will need some time to produce the prescription, and your Pharmacist will need at least 5 working days to obtain the sprays. To enable this product to be obtained please give your Community Pharmacy a copy of this leaflet.

The telephone number for Torbay Pharmacy Manufacturing Unit is **01803 664 707** and their fax number is **01803 664 354**. Only faxed orders are accepted.