

Prescribing and administration information for Alfentanil spray

This information is intended to support hospital doctors prescribing alfentanil spray for pain. Alfentanil spray is unlicensed for use in pain and the patient's GP would not routinely be asked to take on prescribing. This document may however also serve as a useful GP reference if one of their patients is maintained on alfentanil spray by the hospital.

Indications

Alfentanil is a strong opioid with agonist activity at mu and kappa opiate receptors. When administered by the buccal or nasal route it works almost immediately and the effects last 10-15 minutes. It may therefore be helpful for both incident and spontaneous pain

- **Incident (Predictable) pain:** related to movement or activity. e.g. swallowing or coughing where an immediate onset of action of pain relief is desirable. Alfentanil spray is an alternative to fentanyl lozenge (Actiq), but has the advantage of being more cost effective, needs less patient supervision and dose titration can be carried out with one spray.
- **Spontaneous (Unpredictable) pain:** unrelated to movement or activity. Alternative for patients who do not tolerate immediate release morphine or oxycodone, although has the disadvantage of a shorter duration of action.

Prescribing information

Formulation	5mg alfentanil in 5mL
Dose	Each metered dose ("spray") delivers 0.14mL = 140 microgram of alfentanil. The dose equivalence to other opioids is unproven and therefore patients should be started on a low dose and titrated upwards as needed Starting dose is usually 2 "sprays" titrating up to a maximum of 12 "sprays" (More than 12 "sprays" gives a volume which is difficult to hold in the mouth sublingually and is more likely to be swallowed by the patient)
Route	The pump spray bottle unit comes with two administration heads – one for buccal administration and the other for nasal. Alfentanil is usually prescribed for buccal use
How long will the spray last	The pump spray bottle should only be used for one month after it has been assembled. After priming the pump spray bottle should deliver a further 32-33 "sprays". If the patient uses 2 "sprays" at a time the bottle will deliver 16 doses
Status	Controlled drug. The prescription requirements for controlled drugs must be observed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and address in prescribers own handwriting (local requirement) • Form and strength e.g <i>alfentanil spray 5mg in 5mL</i> • Dose e.g <i>2-4 sprays sublingually when required</i> • Total quantity in words and figures e.g <i>1x5mg (one x five milligram) spray</i>

Administration information

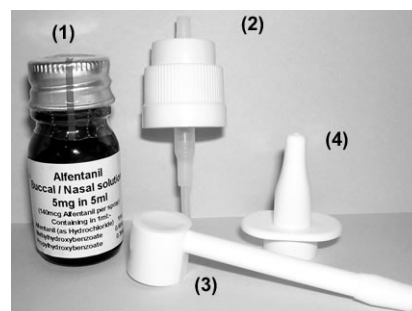
Assembling the spray

An alfentanil spray bottle comes in four parts.

A glass bottle containing 5mL of alfentanil 5mg in 5mL solution (1)

A plastic bag containing three plastic parts :

- The pump mechanism which screws into the glass bottle (2)
- The buccal spray head with 4-inch long delivery tube (3)
- A nostril shaped spray head with clear plastic cover (4)



To assemble a spray:

- Open the plastic bag and assemble the spray (see below), trying to avoid touching the spray and its parts as much as possible
- The spray will usually be prescribed for use by the buccal route (use inside the mouth). If this is the case the nostril spray head (4) can be thrown away.
- Push the buccal spray head (3) onto the shorter of the two plastic tubes of the pump mechanism (2).
- Open the glass bottle (1) and screw the pump mechanism (plus buccal spray head) onto it.
- If the spray has been prescribed to use as a nasal spray, attach the nasal spray head (4) to the pump mechanism (2) and throw away the buccal spray head (3).

Before the pump is used for the first time, it will need to be primed. This is achieved by fully depressing the spray button **two to three times** and this fills the pump mechanism.

This only needs to be done when first setting up the pump, not before each use.

Labelling the spray for ward use

- Label the bottle with the patient's name (each pump spray bottle is for single patient use)
- Label with the date assembled (expiry date is 28 days from assembly)

Administering the spray

To administer the spray, place the delivery tube inside the mouth and spray the required number of sprays onto the inside of the cheek. The patient may be prescribed anything between 2 to 12 sprays.

(Remember to record ward use in the controlled drug register)

Storage, ordering, record keeping and prescription requirements

Ward stock

- Alfentanil is a controlled drug and must be ordered and stored using the normal procedure for all controlled drugs.
- On receipt of ward stock record in the CD register as "alfentanil 5mg/5mL ward stock"
- When a spray is allocated to a patient from ward stock transfer 1 spray from ward stock to a new page in the CD register specific for that patient and record as "alfentanil 5mg/5mL for the named patient"
- Every time a dose is given, record the number of sprays administered. Do not forget to record the number of sprays needed to prime the spray the first time it is used. Each spray bottle should deliver 35 individual sprays of 0.14mL.

Discharge and out patient prescription

The prescription requirements for controlled drugs must be observed (see prescribing information).

Side effects

The side effects associated with alfentanil spray are common to all opioids and include nausea, vomiting, constipation and drowsiness.

Drug Interactions

Alfentanil is metabolised in the liver by the cytochrome P450 3A3/4 enzyme system. Plasma levels can therefore be affected by concurrent use of other drugs that affect these enzymes.

Enzyme inducers <i>(not exhaustive)</i> (may reduce alfentanil levels)	Enzyme inhibitors <i>(not exhaustive)</i> (may increase alfentanil levels)
Carbamazepine Phenytoin Glucocorticoids	Midazolam Erythromycin Ciprofloxacin Fluconazole

Availability

Alfentanil spray is unlicensed. It is manufactured as a special by Torbay manufacturing unit

Supplier	Pharmacy Department Torbay Hospital Tel 01803 664707 Fax 01803 664354
Cost	(£7.91+ VAT) or Minimum order £25 i.e. 3 sprays (for orders once VAT included) Allow 5-7 days for delivery