

Transmucosal Fentanyl (Actiq)

For breakthrough cancer pain

This handout explains what you need to know when your doctor prescribes transmucosal fentanyl (Actiq) for cancer pain.

What is transmucosal fentanyl?

Transmucosal fentanyl is a drug that is given to control pain. It is given only to patients who have been receiving opioids for pain, but who still have “breakthrough pain.” One brand name for this drug is Actiq.

What does my care team need to know?

Some medicines may cause serious or life-threatening side effects when taken with transmucosal fentanyl (Actiq). **Before you start using this medicine**, tell your nurse or provider about all the medicines you take. This includes prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

Your care team may need to change your doses of some medicines and transmucosal fentanyl (Actiq), if they will be used together.

What do I need to know?

If you are using transmucosal fentanyl (Actiq):

- Talk with your provider **before** you take any other medicines. Your provider will tell you if it is safe to take other medicines while you are using transmucosal fentanyl (Actiq).
- Be very careful about taking other medicines that may make you sleepy. These include other pain medicines, anti-depressants, sleeping aids, anti-anxiety medicines, antihistamines, or tranquilizers.
- Keep a list of all the medicines you take. Show your list to your provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.



*Talk with your provider **before** you take any other medicines besides transmucosal fentanyl (Actiq).*

- If you are an outpatient, you **must** have a responsible adult who will drive you home after your treatment. We cannot give you transmucosal fentanyl (Actiq) if you do not have a driver to take you home.

How will this medicine be given to me?

Before we give you the lozenge that contains this medicine:

- A registered nurse (RN) or other provider will closely review your list of current medicines, including opioids. Be ready to report all medicines you have taken on the day you will receive transmucosal fentanyl (Actiq).
- We will give you a form with questions to answer.
- We will take your vital signs.

If you qualify to receive transmucosal fentanyl (Actiq):

- A nurse will give you a lozenge to suck on. It will take about 15 minutes for the lozenge to dissolve in your mouth. We will observe you closely during this time, even if you have used this medicine before.
- You must stay in the clinic for 30 minutes after you receive the transmucosal fentanyl (Actiq), or until your vital signs return to their normal level.
- We will take your vital signs again before you leave the clinic.

Why does it take 15 minutes to give this medicine?

Transmucosal fentanyl (Actiq) is best absorbed through the mucous membranes in your mouth. It is not absorbed very well in the stomach. If you finish taking it too quickly, you will swallow some of the medicine and it will not work as well.

For best pain relief:

- We allow 15 minutes for the drug to be fully absorbed in your mouth.
- Do **not** bite or chew the lozenge. If you do, you will get less relief for your breakthrough cancer pain.
- You may drink some water before taking the lozenge, but do **not** drink or eat anything while it is in your mouth.

If it has been 15 minutes since you finished the lozenge and your breakthrough cancer pain has not eased to a level you can tolerate, tell your nurse or provider.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

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