

GUIDANCE ON USE OF ALFENTANIL INFUSIONS

Drug details

- An opioid analgesic with rapid onset and short duration of action
- Metabolised in the liver, so safer in renal failure than other opioids
- Only available as injection (although this preparation can be used sublingually)
- Ten times more potent than diamorphine

Indications

- Opioid of choice in renal failure
- Intolerance of other opioids

Side effects

- As for morphine

Dose

- $1/30^{\text{th}}$ of daily total oral morphine dose ($1/15^{\text{th}}$ of daily total subcutaneous morphine dose), via syringe driver over 24 hrs
- Use fentanyl for breakthrough
- Fentanyl is five times stronger than alfentanil
- Breakthrough dose is $1/8^{\text{th}}$ of daily fentanyl as it is a longer acting drug than other opioids
- Fentanyl breakthrough dose is therefore $1/40^{\text{th}}$ of the 24hour alfentanil dose

Example conversion

45mg bd oral morphine
= 90mg oral morphine/24 hours
= 3mg sc alfentanil/24 hrs
=breakthrough dose of 75mcg fentanyl sc

See also opioid conversion charts

Ref: Robert Twycross, Andrew Wilcock, *Palliative Care Formulary* third edition (PCF3), 2007;
palliativedrugs.com 2008