PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Alfentanil

This information from UpToDate® Lexidrug™ explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Warning

- This is an opioid drug. Opioid drugs can put your child at risk for drug use disorder. Misuse or abuse of this drug can lead to overdose and death. Your child will be watched closely while taking this drug.
- Severe breathing problems may happen with this drug. The risk is highest when your child first starts taking this drug or any time the dose is raised. These breathing problems can be deadly. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has slow, shallow, or trouble breathing.
- Severe side effects have happened when opioid drugs were used with benzodiazepines, alcohol, marijuana, other forms of cannabis, or street drugs. This includes severe drowsiness, breathing problems,

and death. Benzodiazepines include drugs like alprazolam, diazepam, and lorazepam. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.

- Many drugs interact with this drug and can raise the chance of side effects like deadly breathing problems. Talk with your child's doctor and pharmacist to make sure it is safe to give this drug with all of your child's drugs.
- Get medical help right away if your child does not respond, answer, or react like normal; feels very sleepy or dizzy; passes out; or will not wake up.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to put your child to sleep for surgery.
- It is used to manage pain during surgery or a procedure.

What do I need to tell the doctor BEFORE my child takes this drug?

- If your child is allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell the doctor about the allergy and what signs your child had.
- If your child has any of these health problems: Lung or breathing problems like asthma, trouble breathing, or sleep apnea; high levels of carbon dioxide in the blood,

or stomach or bowel block or narrowing.

- If your child is taking any of these drugs: Buprenorphine, butorphanol, linezolid, methylene blue, nalbuphine, or pentazocine.
- If your child has taken certain drugs for depression or certain other health problems in the last 14 days. This includes isocarboxazid, phenelzine, or tranylcypromine. Very high blood pressure may happen.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell the doctor and pharmacist about all of your child's drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe to give this drug with all of your child's other drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug your child takes without checking with the doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while my child takes this drug?

- Tell all of your child's health care providers that your child is taking this drug. This includes your child's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- The doctor will watch blood pressure, heart rate, and

oxygen levels closely. Talk with the doctor.

- Have your child avoid tasks or actions that call for alertness until the effects of this drug wear off and your child feels fully awake. These are things like riding a bike, playing sports, or using items such as scissors, lawnmowers, electric scooters, toy cars, or motorized vehicles.
- To lower the chance of feeling dizzy or passing out, have your child rise slowly if your child has been sitting or lying down. Have your child be careful going up and down stairs.
- If your child's pain gets worse, if your child feels more sensitive to pain, or if your child has new pain after getting this drug, call your child's doctor right away.
- Be sure your child does not drink alcohol or use products that have alcohol in them. Unsafe and sometimes deadly effects may happen.
- This drug may raise the chance of seizures in some people, including people who have had seizures in the past. Talk to the doctor to see if your child has a greater chance of seizures while taking this drug.

If your child is pregnant or breast-feeding a baby:

- If your child is pregnant or plans to get pregnant, talk with your child's doctor right away about the benefits and risks of using this drug during pregnancy. Using this drug for a long time during pregnancy may lead to withdrawal in the newborn baby. Withdrawal in the newborn can be life-threatening if not treated.
- Tell your child's doctor if your child is breast-feeding a baby. This drug passes into breast milk and may harm your child's baby. Get medical help right away if your child's baby seems very sleepy, is limp, or has trouble breathing.

What are some side effects that I need to call my child's doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your child's doctor or get medical help right away if your child has any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or

swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.

- Signs of high or low blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Signs of low blood sugar like dizziness, headache, feeling sleepy, feeling weak, shaking, a fast heartbeat, confusion, hunger, or sweating.
- Trouble breathing, slow breathing, or shallow breathing.
- Noisy breathing.
- Breathing problems during sleep (sleep apnea).
- Fast, slow, or abnormal heartbeat.
- Feeling confused.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Trouble controlling body movements.
- Seizures.
- Severe constipation or stomach pain. These may be signs of a severe bowel problem.
- A severe and sometimes deadly problem called serotonin syndrome may happen if your child takes this drug with certain other drugs. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has agitation; change in balance; confusion; hallucinations; fever; fast or abnormal heartbeat; flushing; muscle twitching or stiffness;

seizures; shivering or shaking; sweating a lot; severe diarrhea, upset stomach, or throwing up; or severe headache.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your child's doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother your child or do not go away:

- Feeling dizzy or sleepy.
- Upset stomach or throwing up.
- Muscle stiffness.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your child's doctor. Call your child's doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

How is this drug best given?

Give this drug as ordered by your child's doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- It is given into a vein for a period of time.

What do I do if my child misses a dose?

- This drug will be given on an as needed basis in a health care setting.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

- The injection will be given to your child in a healthcare setting. You will not store it at home.

General drug facts

- If your child's symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your child's doctor.
- Do not share your child's drug with others and do not give anyone else's drug to your child.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.
- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your child's doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.

- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

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If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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