PHARMACIST'S GUIDE FOR DISPENSING

ACTIQ® LOZENGES

This document has been reviewed and approved by the Ministry of Health on February 2023

ACTIQ® oral transmucosal fentanyl citrate

Teva Israel LTD, P.O. Box 3190, 124 Dvora Hanevi'a St., Tel Aviv 6944020, Israel, Tel: 1-800-805-005

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed to help you understand the proper dispensing of ACTIQ® (fentanyl lozenges) for patients experiencing breakthrough cancer pain (BTcP). Please read this guide carefully before dispensing ACTIQ® and keep it for future reference. The pharmacist dispensing checklist should be reviewed before dispensing the product. Encourage patients to communicate all medication-related issues to their prescriber.

Note: ACTIQ® lozenges should only be initiated/supervised by physicians who are experienced, knowledgeable and qualified in the management of cancer pain using opioid therapy. Special care should be taken when patients transition from the hospital to home-based care. Pharmacists play an important role in supervising the provision and use of ACTIQ®.

The following materials are also available:

» A Patient/Carer Guide to the safe use of ACTIQ® Lozenges

» A Physician's Guide for Prescribing ACTIQ®

This Pharmacist's Guide (and the other materials listed above) can be viewed or downloaded from the Israeli Ministry of Health website:

https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/DynamicCollectors/patient-safety-information

REPORTING SIDE EFFECTS

Side effects can be reported to the Ministry of Health using the online form for side effect reporting that is found in the Ministry of Health homepage:

www.health.gov.il

or via the link:

https://sideeffects.health.gov.il

or through the marketing authorization holder:

Safety.Israel@Teva.co.il.

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WHAT IS ACTIQ®?

ACTIQ® for the treatment of cancer breakthrough pain

ACTIQ® is an opioid analgesic. ACTIQ® is indicated for the management of BTcP in patients who are already receiving maintenance opioid therapy for chronic cancer pain.[1]

ACTIQ® is suitable for patients aged 16 years and above with BTcP who have been receiving maintenance opioid therapy for at least a week, consisting of:

- At least 60 mg of oral morphine daily, **or**
- At least 25 micrograms of transdermal fentanyl per hour, **or**
- At least 30 mg of oxycodone daily, **or**
- At least 8 mg of oral hydromorphone daily, **or**
- An equianalgesic dose of another opioid[1]

Breakthrough Cancer Pain (BTcP)

- BTcP is when a patient suffers temporary (non-permanent) pain episodes that are of greater intensity than their background pain or the pain they normally experience during maintenance opioid treatment[2, 3]
- BTcP is usually of medium to high intensity. Episodes start quickly and are short-lived (about 30 minutes long).[3] Continuous cancer pain is treated with a number of management strategies, including around-the-clock opioids, other analgesics, and non-pharmacological approaches, but BTcP generally requires rapid- or short-acting opioids[3]

HOW IS ACTIQ® USED?

Left untreated, BTcP can have serious negative effects on a patient's quality of life. As a pharmacist, you should talk to patients before dispensing ACTIQ® to ensure they understand how to use ACTIQ® correctly, according to the Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC) and Package Leaflet (PL):

1 Lozenge	One ACTIQ® lozenge per BTcP episode, with the possibility of taking a second lozenge of the same strength after at least 30 minutes (15 minutes after the patient completes consumption of a single ACTIQ® lozenge) if the BTcP episode is not relieved. No more than two ACTIQ® lozenges should be used to treat any individual BTcP episode
No more than 4 lozenges	Patients should limit consumption to a maximum of four ACTIQ® lozenges per day[1]

Please note that ACTIQ® lozenges are not interchangeable with other Fentanyl products.

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WARNINGS

Overdose

Unintentional exposure to ACTIQ® is considered a medical emergency and a potentially life-threatening event. Make sure that you and your staff know the signs of fentanyl overdose/toxicity and the need for urgent medical attention.

The most serious signs of overdose/toxicity are:

- Altered mental status
- Loss of consciousness
- Coma
- Cardiorespiratory arrest
- Respiratory depression, respiratory distress, and respiratory failure, which have resulted in death
- Cases of Cheyne-Stokes respiration have been observed in case of fentanyl overdose, particularly in patients with history of heart failure

Any of these symptoms require immediate medical attention, as these can lead to death without proper medical treatment. Patients or their carers should therefore immediately call the **Magen David Adom emergency number (101)** in the event of an overdose or the appearance of the symptoms mentioned

- Please ensure that patients and carers are made aware of the signs of fentanyl overdose/toxicity described above, understand the potential seriousness and have been adequately instructed on what to do in an emergency
- Watch for signs that the patient may not be using the product as prescribed, and be aware of the serious risk of misuse, abuse, medication error, overdose, and addiction
- Ensure that the patient is aware of the potential for misuse, abuse, overdose, and addiction associated with ACTIQ®

SAFETY, STORAGE AND DISPOSAL

Remind the patient of the following important storage instructions:

- Do not store ACTIQ® above 30°C
- ACTIQ® should only be handled by patients or their carers. Please advise the patient to never let anyone else handle or use the product
- Store ACTIQ® in protective blister until ready for use
- The particular danger to children if exposed to ACTIQ®
- Please ensure patients understand that in order to prevent theft, diversion (misuse for illegal purposes), and other misuse of the drug, they should store ACTIQ® in a suitably secure place. Fentanyl, the active constituent of ACTIQ®, is a target for people who abuse narcotic medicines or other street drugs and therefore the storage instructions must be closely followed[1]

Please counsel patients on these additional safety and disposal instructions:

- Instructions for opening the blister pack for the lozenges (Package Leaflet)
- Appropriate disposal of ACTIQ® lozenges - any used or unused but no longer required product or waste material should be disposed of in accordance with local requirements.[1] Even if there is a little or no medicine left on the handle, the handle itself must be properly disposed of as follows:
  - If the medicine is totally gone, throw the handle away in a waste container that is out of reach of children and pets
  - If any medicine remains on the handle, place the lozenge under hot running water to dissolve the remainder and then throw the handle away in a waste container that is out of the reach of children and pets
  - If you do not finish the entire lozenge and you cannot immediately dissolve the remaining medicine, put the lozenge out of the reach of children and pets until such a time as you can dispose of the partially used lozenge as instructed above
  - Do not flush partially used lozenge, handles, or the blister packaging down the toilet[8]

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RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH OFF-LABEL USE OF ACTIQ®

Importance of preventing off-label use

- The use of ACTIQ® in any way other than that described in the approved SmPC is considered off-label use. If you are concerned that off-label use may be taking place, please contact the prescriber to discuss your concerns
- Off-label use can take many forms, including prescribing:
  - For an indication other than BTcP in cancer patients, including any other type of pain, acute or chronic
  - If the patient is not receiving maintenance opioid therapy for their background pain
  - More frequent dosing than licensed
  - To someone who is under 16-years old
- Each of these off-label uses poses a **risk** to the patient. At worst, it can lead to **addiction, overdose, and death**. Side effects are generally increased with off-label use

Medication errors are particularly important to avoid when prescribing an opioid

Medication errors include:

- Unintentional drug prescribing error
- Drug administration error
- Drug dispensing error
- Incorrect dosage administered
- Use of an incorrect route of administration

In order to minimize the risk of medication errors, all ACTIQ® labels are color-coded differently for each of the strengths of action:

200 mcg- gray | 400 mcg- blue | 600 mcg- orange | 800 mcg- purple | 1200 mcg- green | 1600 mcg- red

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH "OPIOID USE DISORDER" (OUD)

What is OUD?

- OUD is a "problematic pattern of opioid use that leads to clinically significant impairment or exposure" (DSM-5)[4]
- The diagnostic criteria for OUD include taking too much of the opioid, inability to cut down use, craving, negative effects on work, home, or social life, use in hazardous situations, use despite knowledge of negative effects, tolerance, and withdrawal[4]
- The severity of OUD is determined by the number of diagnostic criteria that the patient meets[5]
- Patients will require monitoring for signs of drug-seeking behavior (e.g. too-early requests for prescriptions). Monitoring also should include a review of prescription frequency for concomitant opioids and psychoactive drugs (such as benzodiazepines)

Who is at risk of OUD?

The following patients may have an increased risk of developing OUD:

- Patients who switch from hospital-based to home care
- Patients with a personal or family history (parents or siblings) of substance use disorder, including alcohol abuse[6]
- Patients who smoke
- Patients with other medical challenges
- Personal history of other mental health problems (e.g. severe depression, anxiety, and personality disorders)

It is important to pay careful attention to the signs of OUD, as detection will ultimately help the patient.
For example, tolerance (the need for more drugs to achieve the same effect) and withdrawal are criteria associated with OUD. A patient with withdrawal symptoms may complain of nausea and vomiting, anxiety, insomnia, hot and cold flushes, sweating, muscle cramps, watery discharge from the eyes and nose, and/or diarrhea.[7]

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MOST IMPORTANTLY

If you believe that a patient might have an issue with their treatment, discuss your concerns immediately with the patient's prescribing physician. Encourage the patient to regularly talk to their doctor about how their treatment is going. Report any known off-label use, diversion, misuse, abuse, addiction, and overdose via the Ministry of Health homepage:

www.health.gov.il

or via the link:

https://sideeffects.health.gov.il

or through e-mail to the marketing authorization holder:

safety.israel@teva.co.il

MORE INFORMATION

Teva Israel Ltd. P.O.B 3190 124 Dvora HaNevi'a St. Tel Aviv, Israel. Phone: 1-800-805-005

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1. ACTIQ® Lozenges — Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC).
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8. ACTIQ®Product Information.

CHECKLIST FOR DISPENSING ACTIQ®

No.	Description	Done
1	Ensure that all the criteria of the approved indication are fulfilled. ACTIQ® should only be prescribed for breakthrough pain (BTcP) in patients already receiving maintenance opioid therapy for chronic cancer pain. If you are unsure about a difference between the label and a prescriber's request, please contact the prescriber for clarification	☐
2	Give the patient and/or carer instructions on how to use the lozenges	☐
3	Make sure the patient/carer reads the Package Leaflet inside the ACTIQ® package	☐
4	Supply the patient/carer with the ACTIQ® Patient/Carer guide and explain the use of the dose monitoring card	☐
5	Explain the risks of using more than the recommended amount of ACTIQ®	☐
6	Advise the patient/carer of signs of fentanyl overdose and the need for immediate medical assistance	☐
7	Explain secure storage and the need to keep ACTIQ® out of the reach and sight of children and pets	☐
8	Explain the correct process for disposal of ACTIQ®	☐
9	Encourage the patient/carer to discuss their maintenance opioid therapy, BTcP, and the patient's use of opioids with their doctor	☐

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