



Remifentanyl for pain relief in labour

Patient information

What is remifentanyl?

Remifentanyl is a strong pain medicine, like morphine. It reduces the pain of contractions, making them easier to manage.

It is given through a drip (IV) in your arm. You can control how much you receive by pressing a button connected to a pump.

Who can use it?

If you are in labour, you can ask your midwife for remifentanyl. It may be offered if an epidural is not suitable for you. A doctor (anaesthetist) will set up the pump for you.

Is it safe for me and my baby?

Yes, remifentanyl is considered safe for both you and your baby. Compared with morphine, it wears off quickly. This is what makes it so safe.

Your baby might be a little sleepy after birth, but this usually lasts only a short time and your baby will be closely watched for any side effects.

Any questions?

Please talk to your midwife or the doctor who sets up the pump. They are there to help you feel safe and comfortable.

Could I feel any side effects?

There may be minor side effects, including:

- Feeling sleepy or dizzy between contractions
- Feeling lightheaded
- Feeling sick (nauseous)
- Slower breathing.

You will be given oxygen through a mask if required.

How do I use it?

Your midwife and doctor will show you how.

- A pump will be connected to a drip in your arm.
- You will get a button to press when you want a dose.
- The pump is set to give the right dose and a safety lock prevents it from providing too much.

It takes 1 to 2 minutes to feel the full effect. Some women press the button at the end of a contraction to feel relief during the next one. Others press it at the start of a contraction. Try both to see what works best for you.

If the medicine feels too strong, or not strong enough, tell your midwife. The dose can be adjusted and you can stop at any time.



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