Fentanyl
Duragesic® is another name for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?
- Fentanyl is a medication that is applied as a patch that releases drug into the blood across the skin. It is used to control pain.

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?
- Fentanyl should be used carefully with other drugs that cause drowsiness or depress breathing.
- Children who have peeled fentanyl patches off of pets and applied them to their own skin have suffered serious adverse reactions including death. Make sure that children and other household pets do not have access to your pet’s fentanyl patch.
- Patients who have a fever may absorb more of this drug across the skin and may suffer more adverse effects. Heating pads should probably also not be used on animals with fentanyl patches as this will also increase the amount of drug absorbed.
- Fentanyl patches should not be applied on the parts where an animal will be laying down. The increased heat and pressure from laying down on the patch can increase the amount of drug released into the animal’s bloodstream increasing the risk of adverse effects.
- Fentanyl is probably not safe to use in pregnancy due to the depressant effects on the fetus.
- If your animal has any of the above conditions, talk to your veterinarian about the potential risks of using the medication versus the benefits that it might have.

What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?
- Fentanyl can slow the breathing and slow the heart rate. Slowed breathing can decrease the ability of dogs to cool themselves as they cannot sweat and cool themselves by panting.
- Some animals will develop a rash at the site where the patch is applied.
- Some animals may become constipated or develop difficulty urinating.
- The effects of fentanyl on the brain may cause some animals to initially become restless or agitated, but your veterinarian can prescribe a tranquilizer to help them get through this period if necessary.

How Should It Be Given?
- The area of application will be prepared by your veterinarian by clipping. Usually your veterinarian will apply the first patch and cover it with a loose bandage. He or she will usually write the date the patch was applied on the bandage. Most patches will last cats and dogs about 3-5 days. Patches tend to last longer in cats than in dogs.
- Fentanyl patches will require at least 12 hours to take effect in dogs and 6 hours in cats. Other pain relievers should be used during this waiting period to ensure that your pet is pain-free.
- The successful outcome of your animal’s treatment with this medication depends upon your commitment and ability to administer it exactly as the veterinarian has prescribed. Please do not skip doses or stop giving the medication. If you have difficulty giving doses consult your veterinarian or pharmacist who can offer administration techniques or change the dosage form to a type of medication that may be more acceptable to you and your animal.
- If you miss a dose of this medication you should give it as soon as you remember it, but if it is within a few hours of the regularly scheduled dose, wait and give it at the regular time. Do not double a dose as this can be toxic to your pet.
- Some other drugs can interact with this medication so tell your veterinarian about any drugs or foods that you currently give your animal. Do not give new foods or medications without first asking your veterinarian.

Dogs and Cats: Fentanyl patches are usually placed on the animal by the veterinarian and will last 3-5 days each.
- Horses: Horses generally do not receive fentanyl patches outside of the clinic.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?
- Fentanyl patches should be stored in a tight, light resistant, childproof container away from all children and other household pets.
- You should be very careful to keep this patch out of the reach of children and humans. Application of this patch to children can result in death. If a child comes in contact with this patch, contact your physician immediately.